THE YOUNG PRIEST'S KEEPSAKE

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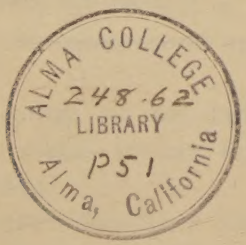
BY

MICHAEL J. PHELAN, S.J.



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PREFACE

THIS little book is written in the hope that it may assist young priests and ecclesiastical students to meet the demands which the life before them has in store.

Works specially suited to the priest, the layman and the nun are happily abundant; but to the young man standing on the threshold of his career as a priest, how few are addressed. Yet it is while his character is in the formative stage, and his weapons are still in the shaping, that advice and direction are of most practical value.

The writer brings to his task only one qualification on which he can rely—his own personal experience.

After having gone through a long course of preparation in Irish ecclesiastical colleges, he lived for nearly thirteen years on the Australian mission, and is now completing a decade spent in giving missions and retreats in all parts of Ireland. Of the college, therefore, and of the foreign and home missions he can speak with

whatever authority a long experience and ordinary powers of observation are supposed to give.

In dealing with the foreign mission he does not rely solely on his own judgment. Many matters here treated of he heard repeatedly discussed by priests abroad, who bitterly deplored that, while in college, they knew so little of the life before them, and regretted that there was then no kind friend to take them by the hand and show them what was in store when the day came for them to plunge into a life that was strange and entirely new. It is to be hoped that this modest volume will, in part at least, discharge the office of that friend.

It may appear, at first sight, that when writing the fourth chapter, "On Pulpit Oratory," the author had before his mind an elaborate discourse, such as is expected only on great occasions. This is not so.

It is true that the various parts of a sermon, when detailed in analysis, may seem, like the works of a watch spread out on a table, bewilderingly numerous and complex. But when we come to construct, it will be found that in synthesis the distracting number of small parts will disappear, to coalesce and form the few

main principles on which either a sermon or a watch is built. These principles are essential to every discourse, no matter how brief. As the humble seven-and-sixpenny "Waterbury" requires its springs and levers equally with the hundred-guinea "repeater," so the twenty minutes' sermon, to be effective, must have a fixed plan and definite sequence as well as the more ambitious effort.

Most of these chapters were written originally for the "Mungret Annual," with a view to assist the apostolic students who are now, as priests, rendering such splendid service to the Church of God abroad. And it was the very generous reception accorded the articles in the ecclesiastical colleges that suggested the idea of presenting them in the more lasting form of a book.

Sacred Heart College, Limerick,
March 17, 1909, Feast of St. Patrick.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

The rapid sale of the first edition of this work surprised no one more than the author. It was not addressed to the public in general, but to a limited section ; the price, while moderate, could not be called cheap ; yet within a little over two months the entire edition was exhausted.

It is impossible to express my deep gratitude to the reviewers. From them the book met with a chorus of approving welcome, without even one jarring note. To all I now tender my grateful thanks ; but the author of " My New Curate " has placed me under a special obligation for his thoughtful critique in the *Freeman's Journal*, and Ibh Maine for his friendly review in the *Leader*. Nor should I omit to thank the ecclesiastical colleges, that not only pardoned the blunt candour of some

of the chapters, but gave the book a more than cordial reception.

The present edition includes two entirely new chapters—the two last—extending over 45 pages. It is hoped that the added matter will prove of as much interest as those chapters of the first edition which received such a hearty welcome.

COLLEGE OF THE SACRED HEART, LIMERICK,
September 29, 1909, Feast of St. Michael.

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The Young Priest's Keepsake

CHAPTER FIRST

CULTURE: ITS NECESSITY TO A YOUNG PRIEST

If you question any priest of experience and observation who has lived on the foreign mission, and ask him what constitutes the greatest drawbacks, what seriously impedes the efficiency of our young priests abroad, without hesitation he will answer—First, want of social culture; and, secondly, a defective English education.

To the first of these this chapter will be exclusively devoted, while the subject of English will be dealt with in the chapter to follow.

The case stated

One of the great disadvantages of living in an island is that we get so few opportunities

of seeing ourselves as others see us. When you seriously attempt to impress the necessity of culture on the student preparing for the foreign mission he generally pities you. In his eyes culture is a trifle, suited perhaps to the serious consideration of ladies and dancing masters, but utterly unworthy of one thought from a strong-minded or intellectual man. But you tell him that without it the world will sneer at him. He then pities the world, and replies—"What do I care about the world's thoughtless sneer; have I not a priestly heart and a scholar's head?"

That reply, if he were destined to live in a wilderness, would be conclusive. An anchorite may attain a very high degree of sanctity and yet retain all his defects of character—his crudity, selfishness, vulgarity. While grace disposes towards gentleness it does not destroy nature. There is no essential connection between holiness and polished manners.

Nor does scholarship either require or supply culture. A mastery of the "Summa" will not prevent you from doing an awkward action. Dr. Johnson's learning was the marvel of his age, but his manners were a by-word. So, if your only destiny was to be a scholar

or a hermit, manners need give you little trouble.

But your vocation is to be an apostle; to go out amongst men; to be the light for their darkness, the salt for their corruption; the aim and goal of your operations are human hearts. This being granted, are you not bound to sweep from your path every impediment that prevents your arm from reaching these hearts? But the most effective barrier standing between you and them is ill-formed manners.

The laws of good society, the refinement of gentlemanly culture may, from your standpoint, be the merest trifles; but they become no trifles when without them your right hand is chained from reaching human souls.

The only remaining question is, Does the world to-day place such a high value on good manners that if I go into it without them my efforts will be in a large degree neutralised? Entertain not a shadow of doubt on that point, such is the fact.

Protestants and Catholics demand culture in the Priest

Proud and pampered society will never bend its stubborn neck and submit itself to the guidance of a man who, judged by its own standard—the only one it acknowledges—is far from being up to the level; an object of con-

tempt perhaps, at best of pity. In its most generous mood it is slow and cautious to take you on trust; its cold analysis searches you; your unplaned corners offend its taste; and except in every detail you answer to its rule and level you are disdainfully thrust aside.

Catholics, while they esteem a mere fop at his just value, expect their priest to rise above the sneers of the most censorious and, if possible, to challenge the respect of all. They are proud of their priest; and surely it is not too much to expect on his part that he will do his best not to make them ashamed of him.

Their Protestant neighbours know of this pride; and if they can but lay a finger on his evident defects they will glut their inborn hatred of the Church by hitting the Catholics on the sensitive nerve, by galling them by caricature and derision of the *gauche* manners of the priest.

Protestant young men, too, will appeal to the pride of their Catholic companions; and an appeal to pride is generally a trump card. They will ask—"Is it possible that gentlemen could submit themselves to the guidance of a clergyman whose manners are unformed and whose English is marred by provincialisms and defective accent?"

In speaking of accents, let me say here I do not ask the young priest to commit the signal folly of attempting to ingraft an imported accent on his own native one. No! He should speak as an Irishman, but as an educated Irishman.

By foreign Canons you will be judged

The fatal mistake on the part of a young priest would be to take Irish opinion as the standard by which he will be judged outside Ireland. In Ireland we call these things trifles, because the people whose eyes are filled with the rich light of warm faith see the *priest* alone, and are blind, or at least generously indulgent, to the defects of the *man*.

Reverse this, and you have the accurate measure by which you will be judged abroad. The *man* and his defects alone are seen; the *priest* and the sublimity of his state are entirely lost sight of. The world judges what it can understand—the *man* alone. Hence the student preparing for the foreign mission may take this as an axiom :—*If people cannot respect you as a gentleman, on the non-Catholic world your influence is nil; and even on your own Catholic people it will sit very lightly.* But he replies—"This is not logical, for a man may be an excellent priest, a good scholar, without social accomplishments." All that I admit, but age

and experience will teach him that logic does not rule the world; some of its greatest actions could not bear the pressure of a syllogism. We must meet the world as it is, not as we would make it. Is it not you who show logical weakness in preparing for this ideal world that has no existence outside your own dreams and ignoring the world of hard facts you will have to face?

No argument to be drawn from the Apostles

You then appeal to facts and say, Look at the apostles. Let me answer—first, you do not attempt to imply that crudity was a help to them. If so, how? Now, the most you can say is that in spite of it they succeeded. But you forget that they had the gift of miracles, and a sanctity so evident that their passport was secure despite their defects.

Unless you can produce the same sanctity and miracles your argument falls to the ground. But to the statement itself—Were not the apostles men of manners? Some, it is true, before their call had little connection with schools, but we may rest assured that three years under such a teacher as they had did wonders. They must be dull indeed not to read the living lesson their Master's character daily taught. His tenderness, His courteous dignity, and gentle consideration for others

were such that in a man we would say they almost bordered on weakness; this was the living model on which they daily gazed and pondered.

This Master then sent them forth to "all nations." They were to mix with the white-robed senators in Rome, and dispute with the highest intellects of polished Athens, to force an entrance into every circle of social life. Could we imagine God sending them forth to that task encumbered with defects that would paralyse their mission if not ensure its defeat.

We must also take into account the gifts of Pentecost. What a change these wrought! The Holy Spirit enriched their intellects and perfected their moral virtues; their trembling wills became braced as iron pillars. For what purpose? To prepare and equip them for their destined mission. Is it not natural to suppose that the same Divine Power swept their characters free from every impediment that could hamper their ministry? So the appeal to the apostles is gratuitous.

Culture necessary for domestic life

In dealing with this question a young priest is to consider more than his flock. Priests on the foreign mission live community life, in hourly contact with each other. You cannot

realise the agony a man inflicts on others by coarse or unpolished manners. The toil of a priest's day is severe, but the hardest day is mere summer pastime compared with the crushing thought of having to turn home to a boorish companion. This living martyrdom reaches its most acute stage when, in society, a man is forced to witness a brother priest expose the raw spots of his character to the vitriolic cynicism of the scoffer.

But the importance of this subject is by no means exclusive to the foreign mission. In Ireland, of late, a spirit of criticism has shown itself, often exacting even to fastidiousness ; so far from time being likely to blunt it, everything points to the probability of its edge growing sharper with years. And the young Irish priest of the future who dares to trample on the canons of good taste need expect scant mercy.

To arms

My advice to all ecclesiastical students is—search and see if unmannerly ways are ingrafting themselves into your character. If so, give them no quarter. Master an approved handbook, and during the recreations raise discussions on details of good manners. Ask your friends candidly to point out your defects. It is far easier to be admonished by one friend whose

correction is swathed in soft charity than await till a dozen sneerers send their poisoned arrows to fester in your heart. In correcting yourselves and asking your friends to admonish you, it will assist you to pocket your pride, to remember that three such weighty issues as the efficiency of your ministry, the honour of the priesthood, and the comfort of your future home will in a large measure be influenced by the degree of social culture you carry out of college.

No man has greater need to fear than he who stands high in his class. When any habit becomes fixed it requires a high degree of humility and moral courage to root it out. But, intellectual pride, nourished by college triumphs, is up in arms. He scorns to be corrected or taught by a world he despises. Let me ask, did God give him these intellectual gifts for himself or as instruments by which to win souls back to their Father ? The man who, rather than bend his own pride, allows his talents to become useless incurs an awful responsibility.

Stubbornly refuse to be corrected or to shape and polish your manners while in college, and one thing I absolutely promise you, with all the authority a long experience can give,

that when you do go out from the college you will meet a master that will bend and break you. The roasting fire of the world's scorn will search the very marrow of your bones.

CHAPTER SECOND

ENGLISH: ITS NECESSITY TO A YOUNG PRIEST

Let me begin by asking one plain question—If all the scholastic wealth with which St. Thomas has enriched the world lay embedded in the mind of a Missionary priest: if he more than rivalled Suarez as a casuist, and Bellarmine as a controversialist, yet if he failed to acquire a mastery over the only instrument by which he could bring to bear the riches of his own intellect on the minds of those around him, of what value is all the wealth entombed within his head?

If he has acquired no command of the rich vocabulary, the graceful elegance of diction, the mysterious beauty of expression, the abundant illustration, the art of storing nervous vigour and living thought into crisp and pregnant terseness: if this one weapon, a finished English education, is not at his disposal, his knowledge, as far as others are concerned, is so much lumber: to the one spot alone—the

Confessional—his efficiency is narrowed. The other fields of his ministry are deprived of the immense service this learning might afford.

Let us see how this works out in practice. The unctions of ordination are scarcely dry on your hands till you begin to realise what you never realised before—viz., that in the most literal sense of the word you belong to the Church Militant.

You go out from college, you are quickly confronted with opposition. At once your brain begins to hew arguments of massive solidity; had you but the skill with which to hurl them you would overwhelm the stoutest foe. This skill you have not got, you never mastered the sciences by which you could smite the aggressor. With rage you, perhaps for the first time, realise your own deficiency. Your arms are pinioned by helpless ignorance of the use of what should be one of the first weapons of the priest. Your thoughts now struggle for birth, but are fated to die stillborn, while the foe laughs you in the face.

Is this not a sad pity: *yet it is an everyday fact.*

There are sixty millions of Irish money lying in the banks throughout this country, yet the nation is perishing from atrophy, starving for want of commercial nourishment. If the gold

now piled in banks were but circulated through the channels of industry, every limb of national life would pulse with new vigour, the remotest corner of the land would feel the influence of the golden current ; so, within the mind of the priest may be hoarded treasures of deepest learning, but unless he has the art of minting and circulating through his parish the glittering coin of polished thought, though his brain be an *El Dorado* of wealth, that parish will run into spiritual bankruptcy.

"You are the Light of the World," said Christ to His Apostles. The same, in effect, He will say to the young priest the day he sets out to continue the work they began ; but how will that light, of which he is the bearer, reach the darkened world for which God has destined it if he neglects to arm himself with the light-diffuser : the only medium of communication between him and his people ? Though the sun is poised in the firmament above us, this earth would remain for ever wrapped in midnight darkness were it not that there is an interposing medium—whatever it be—to waft to us its heat waves and carry its splendours to the tiniest nook and crevice. The language, its graces and powers, are for the priest the instruments by which darkened minds are illumined, by which

the clear rays of living truth are flashed into their gloom.

The man that neglects to acquire a mastery of this instrument incurs a great responsibility.

The devil, too, has a message to deliver, a message of error ; but at his command there are not only perverse intellects but all the elegance of polished language and all the persuasive graces of elocution.

An illustration from everyday life

Let me take an illustration from everyday life. A Catholic child under his father's roof has religion instilled into him. He goes to school, and here his knowledge is developed and enlarged. From the schoolroom he is transplanted into the world to strike roots if he can in stubborn soil and preserve his faith amidst the ice-chills of infidelity.

Foes beset him on every side. He turns to the public library. The infidel review is crisp in style, its arguments catchy, and the brilliancy of its diction captivates. The pages of the fashionable novel are strewn with the rose leaves of literature : the plot enthrals. The arguments of the free-thought lecturer are well reasoned, the sophistries artistically concealed, whilst his mastery over the graces of elocution holds his audience spell-bound.

The young man staggers. He now turns to

where he should expect to find strength. Under the pulpit next Sunday is a mind where the mists of doubt are gathering and darkening. He looks up to the "Light of the World" to have these mists dispelled. Instead of seeing his foes battered with their own weapons he sees these weapons, that in every domain are conquering for the devil, here despised.

He is forced to listen, perhaps, to an exhibition of tedious crudity. He goes away disheartened; perhaps to fall.

Now, the solid theological knowledge in that preacher's head is more than sufficient to shatter the arguments of infidelity; the analytic power acquired during his college course would enable him to tear every sophistry to shreds; but the art of making both of these effective for the pulpit, the mastery of clear and nervous English, the elocution that sends every argument like a quivering arrow of light to its mark, these he neglected, or perhaps contemned.

This is our weak spot; here our position wants strengthening.

Sit by the fireside with that preacher and suggest the advisability of cultivating English and elocution. He replies: "I have two thousand souls to look after, sodalities to work up, schools to organise, and attend, perhaps, four

sick calls in one night." No, *not now, but long years before*, he should have been trained. It is not on the battlefield, when the bugle is sounding the "charge," that the soldier should begin to learn the use of his weapons. In the college, and not on the field of action, is the place to acquire this science.

A ruinous advice

One of the most fatal directions ever tendered to Irish students is—devote all your college years to Classics, Philosophy, and Theology *exclusively*—these are your professional studies—and when you become a curate it will be time to master English and Elocution.

Analyse this and see what it means. Do not learn English or its expression till you are flung into a village without a soul to stimulate or encourage you; or, worse still, till you find yourself in the fierce whirl of an English or American city. "Wait till you are in the pulpit and then begin to learn to preach" is very like advising a man to wait till he is drowning and then it will be time enough to learn how to swim. Would any sane man give such an advice to an aspirant of the fine arts? What would be thought of the man who would say—"If you wish to become a good musician neglect to learn the scales till you come to your twenty-fifth year; or if it is your ambition to be a great painter, permit a quarter

of a century to roll over your head before you learn how to hold the palette or mix the paints." The man that would tender such ridiculous advice would be laughed at. Yet it is not one whit more absurd than the transparent nonsense that has grown hoary from age, and passes unchallenged as a first principle.

It is often asked how is it that the Irish Church has remained so barren.

Eighty years have passed since the bells of the thatched chapels rang in Emancipation. During that time over three thousand talented priests are on the land; yet how small the number of works produced. Why such a miserable result? What has sterilised the intellects of these men? Mainly this fatal advice. How could we have literary tastes among the priests in their pastoral life when such tastes were either frowned down during their college career or postponed to a period when their cultivation became an impossibility.

You must begin while young

No man can become a preacher without becoming a writer first. I need not labour this proposition. A single quotation from the highest authority establishes it. When Cicero was asked the question—"How can I become an orator?" his one answer was—"*Scribere*

quam plurimum." The first step to oratorical eminence was—write as much as possible.

Now, ask any distinguished writer when did *he* begin to cultivate a literary taste. He will tell you with Pope that he " lisped in numbers." He began almost with the dawn of reason. If, then, pen practice must be the first step towards pulpit success, it is while the fancy is tender that it should be trained ; while the receptive powers are hungry in youth they should be fed ; while the habits of thought are fresh and flexible they should be exercised. Wait till the hoar frost of age nips the rich blooms of imagination and stiffens the once nimble powers of the mind, and the cast-iron habits of maturer years have settled on you : literary culture is then an impossibility.

What does this culture imply ? A developed insight into the beauties of thought ; a just appreciation of style ; an intimate acquaintance with the best authors ; an abundant vocabulary and graceful expression. Can these be acquired in a year? or is the time for acquiring them seasoned manhood ?

How worthless and pernicious is this one word " Wait," here more than ever, where mastery of language is in question. But a glance shows how much more absurd it is to let a man

pass out of his teens before putting him through a thorough course of elocution. It is while the muscles of throat and lungs are as flexible as a piece of Indiarubber, and the young ear sensitive to every *nuance* of sound, the future priest must learn to articulate, to pronounce correctly, to husband his breathing, to bend his voice with ease and mastery through the varied octaves of human passion.

A piece of advice which I would give to a young priest who may find himself within reach of an elocution master is to place himself under his guidance for at least the first twelve months.

The very best student elocutionist has, on leaving college, but a theoretic knowledge of the art of preaching. To weave the principles and graces he there acquired into his own compositions in the pulpit is a new experience. To do this with effect he still requires the master's guiding hand.

He should deliver his sermons in the presence of that master, invite him to his church, and ask him to note defects for correction. This plan I have seen acted on with eminent results: it may be a young priest's making: at its lowest estimate it is worth gold.

I can well imagine the young reader objecting

A workable plan

that I would have him turn from his study-desk, where Lehmkuhl and St. Thomas lie, to practise composition and elocution. No, but I want to show how all I have put before him can be done without encroaching to the extent of one hour on his ordinary class studies.

1. Let the most hard-working student gather carefully the golden sands of wasted time that lie strewn even through the busiest ordinary day and see what they amount to in a year. Why not hoard and mint them; for his class knowledge will, to a great extent, be buried treasure except he has the engine by which to deliver it to others.

A student should permit no day to pass without writing out at least one thought. Cover but half a sheet of notepaper—correct, prune, condense, clarify, and then, if you wish, burn it, yet, it is a distinct gain. You are shaping a sword that will stand you in good need yet.

2. During study hours an English author should lie on the desk. When the head grows wearied, instead of uselessly goading the tired jade or consuming brain tissue on that most fatiguing of occupations, day dreaming, sip a page or two of English. You rest your brain, and while doing so store up knowledge, silently develop taste and acquire style.

3. Again, how are vacations consumed ? The student who does not read at least two hours a day is letting a golden opportunity pass and wasting a precious gift of God—time. It may be said that this after all is a rather slow process ; it will only mean about a volume a month. Yes, but that means twelve in a year, or at least eighty-four in your course, not a bad stock to start life with.

4. In the training of the future priest the recreation hour can be converted into the most important item on the day's programme. He plunges from the silence of the study hall into the vortex of the world, for it is the world in miniature ; its passions, its pride, its meanness, as well as its gentleness of heart and heroism of spirit are all flowing around him. If properly utilised, the recreations can be minted into veritable gold. In the term " recreation " I include all those occasions of free intercourse where students meet to interchange thought—the hall, the club, &c.—and the more numerous these are the better. Here the student is his natural self, unrestrained by a master's presence. The young minds are free to wrestle, and opposing thoughts to clash. The fire of contradiction will test the genuine ore : the same fire will consume all that is worthless in

his opinions and principles : the clay and alloy of his character too will go.

He learns to cast away many a cherished notion now dinged and broken in the war of minds ; he is taught to distrust himself and tolerate the opinions of others. If the recreation, however, is to be a mental gymnasium it must be guided by fixed rules, and this is most important.

The tone must be of a high level. No vulgarity ; no scurrility. *In hottest debate we must not forget that we are gentlemen.*

We should argue, not to overcome an opponent, but to make truth evident. Minds in debate should resemble flails on the threshing floor, that labour not to overcome each other, but to separate the solid grains from the chaff and straw.

No man should be ashamed to say " I don't know " or " Perhaps I am wrong."

Without these safeguards the recreation or debate might easily become a cock-pit of unbridled passions. " Our fortunes lie not in our stars, good Brutus, but in ourselves." The making of the priests depends not merely on the college, but also on the students' own endeavours. This latter fact is but imperfectly understood, or acted on only in a very limited

extent. It is from intercourse between minds of various bents, the debating clubs, the social unions, and not the lecture halls or study desks, that the Oxford student draws strength and elegance of character. It is the want or misuse of these opportunities that leaves the young Irish priest so raw and unfinished.

Knowledge only comes from the professor and the book, but the *character* is shaped, rounded, and polished by a variety of agencies lying outside both these. The creation of these agencies is almost entirely in the student's own hands.

The dangers of the hour and how to meet them

If the Irish priest on the foreign mission is to become a force in the future, his course of philosophy must be both solid and practical.

The last half century has not only changed the arms of his adversaries but transferred the conflict to new grounds.

Protestantism is dying. The mere veneer of Christianity is fast fading off among the sects.

The cobwebs of neglect are overspreading the works of theological controversy ; but in the domain of ethics and metaphysics activity daily grows in intensity.

The student would do well to keep this fact before his eyes. It is proper that a priest should

be conversant with the errors of the past and the arguments by which they are met. Many of these errors he will discover exhumed, draped in new disguises, and paraded as the fruit of modern "thought." But it will be well also, in his studies, not to ignore the fact that the Agnostic and the Socialist are, under his very eyes, digging what they confidently assure us is to be the grave of Christianity.

Agnosticism and Socialism are the two great forces to be reckoned with in the immediate future.

Poison-thought has eaten the vitals of non-catholic sectaries. The teaching of so-called Christian churches has evaporated into a mere natural theism, the supernatural element has disappeared. Both the Socialist and Agnostic frankly confess that the demolition of the sects is but a preliminary skirmish: the real battle lies farther afield. The lines of conflict between us and them are daily drawing closer, and it is a question of brief time till we are locked in deadly grip. How are we preparing for this struggle, which may yet convulse the world?

The future priest must be made familiar with the modern objections *in their native dress and form.*

The aspirant for the foreign missions has a

tough quarry before him : it behoves him to steady his hand and point his weapon.

Young men complain of the length and tediousness of the years consumed in preparation for the Ministry. Could I but engrave on their minds the conviction as it lives, fixed and definite, on my own as to the equipment requisite for the efficient discharge of their great office ; could I but show them the thousands untouched that might be within her fold to-day, were the Church's workmen fully aware of the pressing needs of modern life, they would count that hour as lost that did not contribute its quota towards their arming for the future.

P.S.—I cannot do better than here append a list of those books I found in practical experience most valuable in meeting modern thought. I would earnestly ask every aspirant for the foreign mission not to leave the college till he has a familiar acquaintance with every page of them. I take it for granted that the transcendent merits of "Catholic Belief" and "Faith of our Fathers" are so well known, especially as books for intending converts, that there is no need to add them to the list on the following page.

Dealing with Agnosticism, &c.

"Liberalism and the Church"	*Brownson.*
"Notes on Ingersol"	*Lambert.*
"The Newest Answer to the Old Riddle"	*Gerrard.*
"New Materialism"	*Gaynor.*

Dealing with Socialism

"Pope Leo XIII. on Labour."	
"Labour and Popular Welfare"	*Mallock.*
"Socialism"	*Cathrein*

CHAPTER THIRD

SHOULD A YOUNG PRIEST WRITE HIS SERMONS?

Clearing the ground

THAT the young priest may discharge the office of preacher with efficiency and honour, not only must he bring ability and industry to his task, but he must approach it with a mind free from false theories. One unsound principle may mean shipwreck. Amongst the many questions discussed by aspirants to pulpit success, perhaps the greatest prominence is given to the relative merits of the written or the extemporary sermon. This is so important that its full treatment demands an entire chapter.

Before coming to close quarters we may premise a question. If the carefully prepared sermon cost as little trouble as the extemporary effort, would the world ever have heard of this discussion? Oh! the fatal tendency to move on the lines of least resistance, to glide on the downward slope, and when we have reached the bottom to manufacture arguments

and apologies justifying the course we selected! When the question is probed to the bottom you will find that all advocacy of extemporary preaching resolves itself into an apology for laziness.

To me the question has long since ceased to be anything more than a mere academic one, useful perhaps for a debating class, where youthful gladiators flesh their harmless swords. In practical life, the well written, the well prepared sermon was the only one I discovered able to bear the test of experience.

Manning

At the threshold of this discussion the authority of Cardinal Manning may be invoked against us, who, without condemning the written sermon, shows a decided preference for speaking from notes. A written sermon, such as advocated, could scarcely be before his mind when he wrote that chapter in "The Eternal Priesthood." It is evident he had in view the post-renaissance preacher—vain, pompous, decked in borrowed ornament, anxious about the embroidery, and careless about the soul of his discourse. The species, thank God, is extinct.

At any rate, if Cardinal Manning meant to condemn the written discourse such as we understand it, is he triumphantly answered by himself.

The man who advises you to preach from notes and then launches upon the world a goodly set of volumes of carefully written sermons, every line of which passed under his correcting pen, requires no refutation. His action nullifies his advice. It is to be feared, too, that in forming his judgment he relied too much on his own experience, and out of it drew conclusions for others, who could never hope to have his exceptional advantages—a fatal mistake.

Before his conversion he had completed a distinguished career at Oxford. Of the English language and its perfect use he was a past master. The copiousness of diction, elegance of phrase, the power of expressing himself in graceful strength were eminently his. His intellect was stored with abundant knowledge drawn from many sources. The thoughts of his well-ordered mind stood in line as definite and orderly as soldiers on parade. The fibres of his reasoning had waxed strong in encounters with the ablest intellects of the day and before the most distinguished audiences in the literary and debating clubs at Oxford. Add to this the fact that in a keen knowledge of the human heart, its strength and weakness, he was surpassed by no man of his age. This was the equipment with which Manning started life, and it is to be

feared he pre-supposed this, or a great part of it, to be in possession of those for whom he wrote.

Now, what young priest, even the most brilliant of his class, going on the mission can pretend to the hundredth part of the advantages that enabled Manning to dispense with the written page? Therefore, to conclude that because he, under such privileged circumstances, succeeded, you can do the same under a very different set of conditions, is to ignore the hard logic of facts and pay a poor compliment to your reason.

Father Burke and O'Connell

Then, we are confronted not with opinions but names—the two names that will stand for all time in the forefront of Irish orators are those of O'Connell and Father Burke. O'Connell wrote but one speech—his first. The orations delivered by Father Burke in America, by which he achieved a European reputation, were not written. What, then, it is asked, becomes of the advocacy of the written sermon? The answer to this argument is evident. If the question is reduced to one of great names, into the other side of the scales may be thrown not two but dozens of the most illustrious men who not only wrote, but *became famous mainly because they wrote.*

Passing by the great pagan orators, Cicero and

Demosthenes, and the Doctors of the Church, Saints Augustine, John Chrysostom, &c.—these all wrote, polished and elaborated—we come to the four names that have flung a deathless glory around the French pulpit, that created a golden era of sacred eloquence which has never been surpassed : Bourdaloue, Bossuet, Massillon, and Fenelon. I will not labour the argument by showing how much of their strength and fame rested on the construction of their sermons. But, to return to the intrinsic merits of the statement—yes, O'Connell and Father Burke were great orators in *spite of*, and *not because of*, the fact that they spoke extemporarily. So crude were some of O'Connell's speeches, so careless was he of their dress, that Shiel complained : "He flung a brood of young, sturdy ideas upon the world, with scarce a rag to cover them."

If ever there was a case when the man made the sermon instead of the sermon making the man, it was the case of Father Burke. How little he owed to his sermons and how much they owed to his delivery is left on record by a capable judge. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy says : "Father Burke was a born orator ; the charm of *voice, eye and action* combined to produce his wonderful effects. When his words were printed

much of the spell vanished. One rejoiced to *hear* him over and over again, but *re-read* him rarely, I think."* The greatest tribute that can be paid to the genius of these two orators is that compositions, wordy, loose, abounding in repetitions, in their mouths enthralled multitudes. Every defect disappeared; the mastery, the dazzling brilliancy of their oratory swept all hearts and blinded criticism. We well may pause before answering the question: What effects would they have produced had they time to write masterpieces of finished beauty like those of Grattan and of Bourdaloue? where each link in the chain of argument hangs in glittering strength, and each thought shows the flash of the gem and its solidity too.

Defence of the system I

The first great difficulty against extemporary preaching is that, though a priest studies his subject and maps his plan, he still reckons without his host. The mind aroused to activity and warmed by exertion is sure to spring new thoughts, arguments, and illustrations across his path. These offspring of latest birth clothed in freshness will prove a temptation too strong. He will swerve from the main line to pursue them: the tendency to chase the fresh hare can scarcely be resisted. Then another new thought

* "My Life in Two Hemispheres," Vol. II., 274.

springs up, and, alas ! another fresh hunt. The defined sketch lying on his desk is abandoned : the new ideas have mastered him, but he cannot master them. He labours himself to death without avail, for there is neither point, argument, nor sequence : his sermon is a definition of eternity—without beginning and without end. The congregation is groaning in despair, and the only appreciated passage in the whole performance is the preacher's passage from the pulpit to the sacristy.

Now, to a man who writes his sermon, such a catastrophe is impossible. In the process of preparation the field is well beaten and every thought that could arise secured. From the best of these his selection is made. To this selection he clings without danger of swerve. The road on which he travels is not only mapped but free of ambush and surprises. The milestones are erected. He may not be a Bossuet or a Burke, but he speaks to a definite point, has a time to stop, and the people leave the church with a clear idea.

The defenders of extemporary preaching must 11
postulate three essentials in any man undertaking the office. (1) Orderly thought. (2) Abundant vocabulary. (3) Accurate and graceful expressions. Without these he cannot

speak. Admit the want of any one of them and the contention falls to the ground. Now, what young priest coming out of college has this equipment? It is a singular fact, too, that these three can be acquired only by, and are the direct outcome of, pen practice. How is it that this fact has escaped so many? "Writing makes an exact man," says Bacon; and to the question: "How can I become an orator?" Cicero's answer was: "*Caput est quam plurimum scribere.*" When then men point to a Gladstone or a Bright as an example of an extemporary orator we are entitled to ask: "In what sense can they be called extemporary speakers, except in the most limited, since the well marshalled ideas, the flowing periods and elegant graces of delivery are the products of reams and reams of written pages and years of patient drudgery?" Yet, even with all these advantages, on great occasions it was on the written page they relied. Till the young priest, then, comes to his task as well furnished as a Gladstone or a Bright, the advocates of extemporary speaking are out of count.

III. The extemporary preacher challenges nature on her own ground. No one need doubt the issue. Nature will conquer, and the man who defies her will succumb. He endeavours to

think, to select word-clothing for his thoughts, to labour his memory, and deliver his sermon, and performs all four operations at the same time, a task clearly impossible, but more so when we remember the usual embarrassments that beset a young preacher—the nervous agitation, the want of self-control, the desire to succeed. It ends generally in a stammer and then a break, greeted by the congregation with a sigh of relief or perhaps a sneer of contempt.

Is it by preaching such as this you hope to challenge the respect and get a hold on the intellect of a cynical world? Is it through such instrumentality you would bring home the Church's message to proud and festering humanity? No one can succeed who attempts more than one task at a time.

Look to analogy. At the moment when a regiment is expected to charge, you don't find it engaged in collecting ammunition, sharpening swords, and learning drill. All these necessary preliminaries are long since completed. Now every bridle is grasped, every sword hilt in grip, and the rowelled heels are ready to dash into the horses' flanks at the first note of the trumpet blast.

The preacher should come to the pulpit in a like state of preparedness, with his thoughts

already gathered, moulded, polished and clothed in the words that fit them best ; with every argument as definite and well knitted as a proposition in Euclid ; the page swept clear of superfluous verbiage ; each idea standing out bright as a jewel in its setting, and the whole so thoroughly committed to memory that he can defy the most critical to discover a trace of effort. He should come, holding his elocutionary forces in reserve, and ready, when the moment arrives, to flash from his lips each living thought and send from his heart the waves of subtle, unseen fire to melt, rock, or subdue the hearts of others, instead of attempting four tasks simultaneously, and failing in all. His sole business in the pulpit is not to shape his message or to clothe his message, but to gather and converge all the powers within him for one grand purpose and it alone—to send that message home.

These pages are written mainly for the Irish priest on the foreign mission. It is well he should be under no delusion. In Ireland a slipshod or unprepared sermon may meet with indulgent charity. A very different reception awaits it abroad. The priest who attempts it will quickly discover how he is set up for a sign that shall be contradicted. The free, white light of open criticism penetrates even the sanctuary.

There is no dignity to hedge any man. Congregations smart at being treated to such poor fare, and will not leave him long in ignorance of their opinions. Perhaps while in the pulpit the sight of many a curving lip will make the blood tingle or cause the shame spot to burn on his cheek.

Again, the priest on the foreign mission will never face a congregation that is not sprinkled with Protestants or unbelievers. Should he not then consider the feelings of his own people who are humiliated or filled with honest pride by the manner in which their pastor acquits himself in the eyes of strangers? Waiving then all supernatural motives, should not every priest have sufficient manly pride, self-respect and sensibility for the honour of his exalted office to lift himself and his work above the sneer of the most censorious, and challenge the respect, if not the admiration, of every listener?

The preparation should begin not on the day the sacred oils are poured on the young priest's hands, but on the day he enters college. His eyes should be kept fixed on the goal before him. "I am to be a preacher, and every obstacle that stands on my path must go down, and every advantage that goes to make a great orator, at all costs, I must make my own." This ambition should be nourished till it con-

sumes him, till it becomes "his waking thought, his midnight dream." His reading, recitation and debates should be studied under the light of this lodestar of his destiny : at first shining afar off, but swiftly nearing as each vacation ends.

Objectors answered I.

Those who champion the method of extemporary preaching lay great stress on two points. (1) The extemporary preacher has a natural warmth and earnestness of conviction that goes straight to the heart. (2) These, they maintain, can never accompany the prepared discourse. Let us examine these two statements. It is true that when men speak under the influence of strong emotions, passion may, in a large measure, compensate for accurate expression and sequence of thought, especially with a rude or half educated audience. In proof of this, Peter the Hermit and Mahomet are striking examples. We are dealing, however, not with extraordinary but the ordinary demands on a priest's powers, and it would be poor wisdom to stake all his success on the chance moods of his temperament. To-day the tempest may rock his soul and his words bear the breath of flame ; but, by next Sunday, the spirit has passed, his passions are ice chill ; he is confronted with the duty of preaching, and on what support shall he now lean ? We must also remember that

with increasing education the popular mind is becoming more analytic, and congregations less willing to accept emotions, no matter how sincere, as a substitute for reason.

The second statement—that the written sermon cannot be vitalized with fervour—seems childish in face of the fact that even actors, speaking the thoughts of men dead three hundred years, move people to tears or cause their blood to blaze. The great pulpit orators, to whom allusion has already been made, preached carefully written sermons, yet over ten thousand hearts they poured lava tides that swept every prejudice in their fiery breaths.

What, then, becomes of this trite assumption when there are iron facts like these to fall upon it? Again, it is objected that the freshness disappears in elaborate preparation, and an oft-repeated sermon becomes stale to its author. Shiel, we are told, "always prepared the language as well as the substance of his speeches. Two very high excellences he possessed to a most wonderful degree—*the power of combining extreme preparation with the greatest passion.*" Shiel

That disposes of the first statement. Now, does the repetition of the same sermon cause it to grow flat? Listen to the actor on his hundreth night, and see have he and his words

Wesley

grown weary of each other. Wesley wrote every sermon, and repeatedly preached the same discourse, with the result that so far from losing by repetition it gained ; and Benjamin Franklin, who was the American ambassador in England at the time, assures us he never became truly eloquent with a sermon till he had preached it thirty times. The following graphic picture of the effects produced by the preaching of Wesley and his two companions will scarcely help to support the theory that a sermon preached frequently becomes fruitless :—" He looked down from the top of a green knoll at Kingswood on twenty thousand colliers, grimy from the Bristol coalpits, and saw, as he preached, the tears making white channels down their blackened cheeks. . . . The terrible sense of a conviction of sin, a new dread of hell, a new hope of heaven, took forms at once grotesque and sublime."*

We have heard preachers from whose lips each thought fell as fresh and as hot as if that moment only it welled up from the fountains of the heart; yet each rounded and chiselled sentence, that seemed to flow so spontaneously, cosily nestled between the covers of their manuscripts. We have watched the varied gestures, the cadences of voice and facial expression to harmonize with

* Green—" Short History of the English People."

and so express the sense of the words that one seemed to grow out of the other; still these graces of elocution, that looked so artless and so charming, were the fruit of long years of study. All was fresh! All was natural! All palpitated with the blood of life, yet all were the products of previous toil. It is nonsense, then, for any man to assert that the written sermon must bear the stamp of artificiality or that the fire evaporates in the passage from the desk to the pulpit.

But I may be told there is small time for writing sermons. It is singular that where there is most time on a priest's hands there are fewest sermons on his desk. But to the objection. One of the strongest motives urging the writer to insist on the written sermon is his deep conviction of the shortness of time, for there is no more expeditious way of squandering that precious gift of God than by preaching extemporary sermons. II.

This is how the case stands. You have to spend as much time in gathering and arranging the matter for the extemporary as for the written one. Next year you may have to preach on the same gospel or feast; of what use will your notes be then? The ideas, arguments, and illustrations that now spring to your mind with a glance at this cipher or note will then have

vanished. The cipher remains, but its inspiring power has passed. The oracle is dumb. You may summon spirits from the vasty deep—but will they come ? You have again to face your old task ; year after year the same drudgery awaits you with less hope of success. The brain, at first stimulated by novelty, poured forth the hot tide of thought ; now it will answer only to the lash. At the end of five years what hoarded reserve have you laid by ? Your hands are as empty as the day you started, with this disadvantage, that you have lost the habit of labour you acquired at college—a serious loss. When a man permits the fine edge of college industry to become blunted, the best day of his usefulness is passed. This treadmill of ineffectual toil fills with disgust, till finally all efforts are abandoned, and the people are treated to Hamlet's reading : " Words, words, words. " This is the usual series of evolutions through which an extemporary preacher passes. He begins with good intentions and bad theories. The system breaks down, but his habits are now too set to try another, and so he runs to seed. Here you have explained the fruitlessness, indeed the paralysis, of many a pulpit.

In the written sermon, on the other hand, you have a treasure for life ; years pass, but your

sermon remains, an instrument becoming more flexible and telling every time you use it. You are independent of your mood, on which the extemporary preacher has to lean so much. You can also defy chance that may call you to the pulpit at a day's notice. Your motto is : *Semper paratus.* Your brain may be barren and your feelings frigid, but here are thoughts already made and shaped. They are your own ; and the mind instinctively responds to the children of its own birth. It rises, clasps, and embraces them. The passion glow enkindles afresh ; and heart and words are aflame with the ancient fires. When for the first five years you lay aside a well-written sermon a month, what a handsome stock-in-trade is at your disposal for life—your fortune is made.

Incitements to toil

The world is in no humour to stand half-hearted work ; it will bow its proud head only to the man who pours out sweat ; and Bourdalone's standard of excellence will hold for all time. His answer to the question " What was your best sermon ? " is : " The one I took the most pains with." His labour at the desk was the precise measure of his success in the pulpit. The French have a proverb, " *Tout vaut ce qu'il coute.*" (" Everything is worth what it costs.")

See how laymen put our lethargy and its

apologists to shame. Look at the author with pallid cheek and fevered brow, half starving in an attic, perfecting his style, polishing his periods. There is the actor, haggard, jaded, toiling for hours at a single passage, that he may interpret its meaning and enchain his audience. While the world is dreaming the barrister is studying his brief, ransacking tomes, wading through statutes, in search of one to support his contention, knitting his defence in logical terseness, cudgeling his brains for ingenious appeals to move a jury. The lives of eminent lawyers are records of appalling drudgery.

Turn to the great doctors of the church. After preaching for thirty years, St. Augustine did not consider himself free from the obligation of writing his sermons. He prepared, he tells us, *cum magno labore.* "I have," says St. John Chrysostom, "traversed land and ocean to acquire the art of rhetoric." If giants so laboured, who are we to expect exemption? Ah! if our bread entirely depended on our sermons, as a lawyer's on his briefs or an actor's on his parts, what a revolution we should behold! Yet how humiliating the thought! Every time you go into the pulpit it is to plead a brief for Christ. The destiny of many a soul hangs on your effort. Will you permit yourself

to be outdone in generous toil by the lawyer, who consumes his night not to save a man from an unending hell, but from a month's imprisonment ?

To-day the devil's agents put forth sleepless activity. The world rings with the clash of warring forces. The priest, then, that idly folds his arms and manufactures sops for a gnawing conscience, while the very air is electric with the energies of assault, that priest is set up not for the resurrection but the ruin of many in Israel.

CHAPTER FOURTH

HOW SHOULD THE YOUNG PRIEST PREPARE HIS SERMONS?

The pulpit, as an instrument for the salvation of human souls, holds, after the Sacraments, first place. Indeed the frequentation and proper reception of the Sacraments themselves largely depend upon it.

Never since the first Pentecost was its agency a more pressing necessity than to-day. The apostles of evil are busy. The printing press teems beyond all precedent, obscuring truth and belching forth poison over the world of intellect with a reckless audacity that scorns all restraint. The powers of darkness have seized, polished with unstinting labour and sharpened into slashing efficiency, the varied weapons in the armoury of the orator—crispness of style, brilliancy of diction, a declamation that covers the want of argument and gilds sophistry till it passes for truth. The question for us is—how shall we meet the enemy with steel as highly tempered as his own?

Cicero embraces within the compass of three words the whole scope of the orator.

Docere.—To instruct the intellects of his hearers.

Placere.—To use those varied arts and graces by which the instruction is rendered palatable and agreeable.

Movere.—To move their wills to action.

The last function is by far the most important.

The preacher's triumph lies not in the conviction of the intellect, nor in the approbation of the tastes, but in the arousing of the wills of his hearers. The will is the goal-point at which he aims from the beginning.

A doctor may persuade his patient that bitter medicine and active exercise are necessary, but so long as the sick man lies on the sofa and nods assent this barren conviction is of little profit. When, however, the persuasion forces him to take a six-mile walk and swallow the revolting draught, then, and only then, is triumph secured. So a preacher may convince the habitual sinner of the heinousness of sin ; he may win his applause by the cogency of his reasoning and the brilliancy of his style ; but not till he has moved his will to fling the old fetters to the winds, not till he brings him a

tearful penitent to the confessional, is his work complete.

We shall now take the three words of Cicero in order.

Docere

How shall we accomplish all implied in that word "*docere*?" How embed conviction in the minds of our hearers? Fill your own head to repletion with the subject; be ambitious to leave, if possible, no book unread, books of even collateral bearing. The more thought stored up the more complete will be your mastery over the subject and the more abundant the materials from which to select. I was struck by a letter from Father Faber to a friend:—"I intend writing a book on the Passion. I have already read a hundred works on the subject; see if you can get me any more." A hundred volumes, yet he looks for more! Hence his brain was saturated with his subject, and when he tapped it, how copiously it flowed! What books should I read?

What books to read

The solid matter in Theology and the Sacred Scriptures and their developments. A book of sermons is the last to open. Why? You wish to raise a structure, then go to the original quarry where you have material in abundance. The arguments that bear the shaping of your own chisel, though not as polished as those you would borrow, will fit more naturally and

adorn with greater grace. There are two great risks in reading sermon books—a tendency to imitate the style and a temptation to filch the jewels. The style may be very sublime, but the question is will it suit you. Your neighbour's clothes may fit him admirably, but on you they would hang lop-sided.

The second danger is even more fatal. A struggling tyro who makes an inartistic attempt to adorn his discourse with the most brilliant passages from Bossuet renders his production not only worthless but grotesque. The man who can build a labourer's cottage handsomely should be content; but when he attempts to engraft upon it the turrets and pilasters of the neighbouring mansion he covers his work not with ornament but ridicule. "Am I then," you will ask, "to cast aside the brilliant thoughts and happy imagery I meet in my reading?" No, I only ask you not to use them *now*. Note them for re-reading. Cast them as nuggets into the smelting-pot of your own brain. Trust to time and the alchemy of thought to transmute them. Wait till these thoughts become your thoughts. The intellect will assimilate this foreign material and send it forth on some future occasion, palpitating with the warm blood of natural life, to strengthen the frame-work of your reasoning

or adorn your composition with veins of natural beauty.

How shall I read?

Read with a pencil and paper slip beside you, not only to jot down arguments and illustrations, but to seize on the inspirations that may come. The thoughts we get from books are not at all as valuable as the train of natural ideas these books excite. When the mind is once set going there is no knowing what rich ore it may strike. When the brain throbs in labour with thought struggling for birth, when the soul is full and the imagination in flame, this is the golden moment. Each idea now stands out clear cut as a cube of crystal, and colours of unwonted richness are draping the fancy. Hence, at all hazards, lay hold of this inspiration. Close the most interesting work; leave the most fascinating society; heed neither food nor sleep till it is secured.

For you this spirit may never breathe again. Let this moment pass, and when you do invoke the intellect it is cold and barren, and the heart that yesterday blazed with living fires holds lifeless ashes now. It is not always when you have pointed your pencils and spread the virgin page before you thought will come. The ideas that have revolutionized the world came at times and in places most unlooked for.

When musing on the swaying Sanctuary lamp

during Benediction, Galileo discovered the laws of the pendulum. Such a trifle as the fall of an apple suggested the laws of gravitation to Newton ; and the first idea of the steam engine came to Watt while he was watching the lid rising from the boiling kettle. During a royal banquet the argument to crush the Manicheans grew on the great mind of St. Thomas, and the king made his secretary write it down on the spot. Had not these men trained themselves to admit and welcome the angel visitant, no matter when or where he came, the stagnant pool of the world's ignorance might have remained for ever unstirred.

Your notes are now before you, some the offspring of original thought and others culled from reading. The former require only polishing and shaping, but the latter must pass through your own intellect ; every thought must feel the brain heat before it becomes palatable. We do not ask people to eat meat raw, so we should take care not to offer them ideas cold and untouched by the warmth of our own reasoning. Think over, ruminate, roll them from side to side, let them sink down through the tissues of your own brain and settle there ; then when you send them out warm, bearing the stamp of your own minting, they will be found effective.

Remember that to translate dry theology into questionable English, encumbered with technical expressions, is not writing a sermon; but the man who takes up the theological principles, simmers them in his own thought, wraps them in the transparency of clear language, illustrating them with his own imagery, and thereby bringing them within the grasp of the meanest intelligence, that man, in a sense, creates the truth anew.

You begin the work of construction by making out a sketch argument. Let a well-jointed syllogism underlie and form the framework of your sermon. The conclusion of that syllogism must be the goal point at which you aim. That once selected, all other parts of the sermon should tend towards it. As all roads lead to Rome, so all members of the argument should converge to this point. The congregation should leave the church with that idea fixed and clear as a star of light before their minds.

In writing, as in committing to memory, you should keep the audience ever before the mind's eye. Attack it on every side; pursue it with argument, and never leave it in the power of an intelligent man to say: "I do not understand what he means."

This habit of writing with the audience before

us not only secures cogency and point for our arguments and clearness for our illustrations, but it saves us from the fatal mistake of producing not a sermon but an essay.

Here our meditations assist us. The daily habit of balancing and introspection enables a man to read and analyse his own heart, its strength and weakness. He becomes familiar with the springs and levers that move it, the storms that convulse and the sunshine that gladdens the mysterious world within his own breast. How useful this knowledge when he comes to train the artillery of the pulpit on the hearts of others!

Placere

So far we have been studying how to mortise the joints of our arguments into well-knit and shapely strength; the pure scholastic, however, possesses but half the weapons of the preacher. The best built skeleton is repulsive till it is clothed with flesh, colour and beauty. This is the rhetorician's task. He comes with his graceful art, and drapes the dry bones of hard reasoning, clarifies the arguments by illustrations, clothes them in language crisp and sparkling, weaves around them the warm glow of fancy and renders the hardest truths palatable by the grace of diction and delivery. He accomplishes all implied in the word "*placere*."

When rhetoric and logic clasp hands the standard of triumph is fairly certain to be planted above the stubborn heart. We must, however, remember that the arts of rhetoric are subordinate to the reasoning, and must be brought forward only for the purpose of driving the reasoning home. But since man's faculties are not divided into watertight compartments, neither should the sermon intended to influence him.

Our reason is not independent of our passions; our feelings so influence our judgment that even in our greatest actions it is hard to disentangle and say so much is the product of one and so much of the other. The sermon should be constructed to fit the man; argument and emotion should not stand apart, but dovetail and interlace.

Sheil

In the art of entwining the garlands of rhetoric around the framework of argument, Sheil stands conspicuous. Lecky says of him—"His speeches seem exactly to fulfil Burke's description of perfect oratory—half poetry, half prose. Two very high excellencies he possessed to the most wonderful degree—the power of combining extreme preparation with the greatest passion and of *blending argument with declamation.*

"We know scarcely any speaker from whom it

would be possible to cite so many passages with all the *sustained rhythm and flow of declamation, yet consisting wholly of the most elaborate arguments.* He always prepared the language as well as the substance of his speeches. He seems to have followed the example of Cicero in studying the case of his opponent as well as his own, and was thus enabled to anticipate with great accuracy."

The hint contained in the last paragraph is invaluable to the man who proves or expounds doctrine. It sometimes happens that there is an objection so natural that it seems to grow out of the reasoning. Perhaps, while the preacher is speaking, it is taking shape on the minds of the hearers ; at least sooner or later it is certain to recur.

How is it to be dealt with ? Let it pass, and the audience carry away the argument with a cloud of doubt hanging around that goes far to destroy its force. Or it may be that when he opens the morning paper it confronts him, set forth in the most convincing shape, with the advantage of having, at least, twenty-four hours to rest on the public mind before he can touch it. Therefore, let no such objection pass, but grapple with it here and now, and tear it to shreds. Here you are master of the situation,

and can present the objection in a shape most accessible to your own knife. By anticipating an antagonist you break his sword and render your own position unassailable.

Before our preacher goes into the pulpit just one word in his ear—Beware of two very common defects—(1) *Rapidity of speech* and (2) *Want of proper articulation.* A people who think warmly, as we Irish do, speak rapidly. Thought is rushed upon thought and sentence telescoped into sentence. Before sending forth an idea, take care that its predecessor has got time to settle on the minds of your hearers. In articulation try to earn the eulogy passed on Wendell Philips : " He sent each sentence from his lips as bright and clear cut as a new made sovereign from the mint."

Movere What is the main weapon of the orator ? Demosthenes answers—" Action." Mr. Gladstone—" Earnestness." But St. Francis Borgia probably explains what both mean when he advises us to preach with an evidence of conviction that makes it clear to the audience you are prepared to lay down your life at the foot of the pulpit stairs for the truth of what you say.

Without this deep-seated conviction and the enthusiasm that flows from it, your fire is but painted fire, your thunder the thunder of the

stage. This living earnestness is the spark that illumines and vitalizes all. Without it the best built sermon is but a painted corpse ; but when the soul gleams forth in the flashing eye and quivering lip, waves of unseen fire are issuing with every sentence, and arrows of light silently piercing every heart. The most stubborn prejudices are forced to melt and the most depraved wills are swept on the crest of the grand tidal wave, slowly gathering from the start ; but when the preacher forgets himself and his surroundings, flings self-consciousness away, goes outside himself, pouring the hot tide from his own glowing heart, till every flash of his eye and every wave of his hand becomes a palpitating thought, then his audience surrender ; their hearts are in the hollow of his hand, wax to receive any impression ; their wills can be braced and lifted to the sublimest heights of heroism—this is triumph.

O'Connell

It is said that the great mastery O'Connell exercised over the people mainly sprang from the passionate earnestness of his conviction. The nation's heart seemed merged into his own. He stood forth her living, breathing symbol. When he spoke it was Ireland spoke. Her passions rocked his soul ; her humour flashed from his eye ; her scorn gleamed in his glances,

and her sobs choked his utterance. Ah! if preachers were as filled with the Spirit of Christ as this man was with the spirit of patriotism, what a revolution we might witness!

You ask—"How then do actors move people since there can be no enthusiasm when men know they simulate unreal people and unreal passions?" I answer, that the first step towards becoming a great actor is to fling aside that knowledge and hand yourself over the willing victim of a delusion. You must not *act* but *live* your part: persuade yourself that you are the character you personate: surrender your heart to be torn by real passions and wrung by real sorrows.

The answer is well known which a celebrated actor once gave to a divine:—"How is it that you so move people by fiction and our preachers fail to move them by truth? "Sir, we speak fiction as if it were fact, and your preachers speak truth as if it were fiction."

Here we leave our preacher facing his audience and filled with but one idea: I have a great message to deliver and I will lay hold of every means to send that message home; voice, passion, style, gesture, these are my arms, and with these I hope to conquer.

In parting we take a glance at the preacher's

exalted mission, and we may well ask: What in the whole range of human occupations does this world hold worthy of being compared to it?

Parting glance at the preacher's mission

The battle-field, it is true, has its glories, but it has its horrors also. Who can paint the pride with which Napoleon saw the triumph of his skill crush two Emperors at Au terlitz or the rapture with which he beheld the trophies of great kingdoms at his feet? The fatigues of winter marches were forgotten when in the fiery flashes of his veterans' eyes he read his own renown, while their applauding shouts fell like music on his ears. But blood soils the proudest trophies of war, and across the perspective of victory the spectres of murdered men will stalk.

Human eloquence, too, has its conquests, the purest, the most beautiful in the natural order. How the pride flush heightens on the orator's cheek as he watches the crusts of prejudice melt and hostile hearts surrender; when he marks the bated breath and the hushed silence attesting his victory more eloquently than the stormiest applause! He sees the varied moods of his own soul mirrored in the faces around him, as he summons forth what spirit he lists: tears or laughter, murmurs or applause answer to his call.

What pen can picture the ecstacies that

thrilled the soul of Grattan as he gave utterance to the spirit of expiring freedom in those orations that rank among the world's master-pieces ? The snows of age melted and the decrepitude of years was flung aside, and his eyes gleamed with strange fires as he beheld sodden corruption struck dumb and hang its guilty head ; when he saw the wavering drink fresh courage with each new outburst, and men of commonest clay transformed into heroes by the blaze of his genius. Glorious triumphs indeed ; but, alas ! human, and as such doomed to die.

But in the sublimity of his purpose and the imperishable nature of his conquests the preacher stands alone. Compared with his the greatest trophies of the battle-field or the forum are feeble trifles.

The preacher, in prayer and study, goes down over the green swards of Calvary, and there gathers the ruby drops of Redemption. He ascends the pulpit and pours them as a purple tide over souls that are parched and perishing. As when the Pentecostal fire rested on the Apostles' heads, a new light filled their minds and a new flame sprung up within their hearts ; so when the same spirit breathes through the preacher's lips, the clouds of ignorance dissolve and the light of truth divine glorifies the minds

and inflames the souls of his hearers. The ears of faith can hear the applause of angels and the eyes of faith can read Heaven's approval in the flashing glances of the Blest, as with each stroke the preacher widens the empire of the Precious Blood and piles palpitating trophies before the Sacred Heart. Ah! here is a field worthy of the highest ambition that ever burned within a human breast.

Hence, we should toil, toil, toil, and call no labour excessive that we put forth in burnishing into polished efficiency every weapon God has given us for the service of his pulpit.

CHAPTER FIFTH

A SOPHISTRY EXPOSED. ADVICE GIVEN

Theologian and Preacher—The Difference

It is amazing to think how often the offices of theologian and preacher are spoken of as if they were identical. Now, the functions of theologian and preacher stand widely apart. To the reflective mind this sounds like repeating a truism; yet what a world of confused thought and ignorant criticism would be cleared from the subject if this fact were kept well in sight.

When you say that a young priest is becoming a good preacher you are met by "impossible! he never got a prize in theology."

This is supposed to give your poor judgment its final *coup;* argument after that is useless: *causa finita est.*

Now, I do not think our appreciation of an eminent surgeon is lessened by our being told that he is a poor chemist; yet the difference between these respective professions is scarcely

more radical than that which separates the office of preacher from that of theologian.

To the ordinary public the theological treatise is a sealed book. It is the preacher's duty to break that seal; to take out the dry truths stored there; to render them palatable and inviting, and bring them within the grasp of the plainest intelligence.

Solicitor and barrister

Few occupations more aptly illustrate this difference than those of solicitor and barrister. The attorney works up the materials for the case: he groups statutes, discovers principles, tabulates references, supplies dates. While he does not plead himself, a man so armed is invaluable at the elbow of an able advocate; without the barrister, however, especially where the prejudices, interests, and the imagination of a jury have to be worked upon, his load of learned lumber would be of small value. The theologian makes out the brief: the preacher pleads it.

To render this distinction clearer let us take one more illustration. No animal can exist on air and clay and sunlight alone. Though these contain the elements on which it is fed; yet, though surrounded by them in most ample abundance, he must perish if a third power is not brought into play. The vegetable world

comes intervening between the raw chemicals and the hungry man. Out of earth and air and light it builds the ripened sheaf, the succulent apple and the savoury potato. So, though bookshelves groan under calf-bound tomes hoarding the hived treasures of the masters of theology, the common minds of the multitude would starve did not the preacher interpose as interpreter of the theologian's message, drawing forth from his storehouse truths and principles out of which he manufactures the daily bread on which the ordinary man must live. Without his aid the richest repository ever clasped between the covers of a book would remain a *fons signatus* a *hortus conclusus*. The prophet of God saw the dry bones scattered over the valley of desolation till the breath of a new power passed over them, and lo ! (1) " the bones came together each one to its joint ; (2) the sinews and the flesh came upon them . . . (3) and the skin was stretched out over them . . . and the spirit came into them and they lived."

The attorney and the theologian gather the dry bones, but on the preacher and the barrister lie the fourfold task of mortising the joints into each other, binding them with the sinews of argument, clothing them in living beauty and vitalizing the whole structure with the flame of

impassioned earnestness. Only when this has been done will they live.

So thoroughly distinct are the two offices it rarely happens that a professional theologian becomes an efficient preacher. The concentration and exclusive exercise of one faculty unfits him for a task demanding many.

People do not come to church to hear spoken treatises or witness dissecting operations on subtle distinctions. They come to be instructed, pleased and moved.

Again, for the perfect fulfilment of the preacher's task, amongst other gifts he must have imagination; but to the master of an exact science like theology an exuberant fancy might prove a fatal dowry.

A clear statement of this truth holds out hopeful encouragement to the man whose theological attainments could not be described as "brilliant": it teaches, too, the man who has distinguished himself in theology that if he ambitions being a preacher he has an entirely new set of sciences to master, but, best of all, it breaks into small bits an oft-used weapon in the hands of the young preacher's arch-enemy—the critic.

The critic at work

How often do we see this self-constituted oracle rely for his sole support on this sophistry?

You turn from a church door filled with admiration ; there is a glow of rapture around your heart ; every nerve is tingling ; you have been enthralled. A truth, old indeed but now dressed in a new robe, lives before your mind with a meaning and a richness of colour never experienced before. Your will is swept captive on the crest of that subtle tide of unseen fire that seems to fill the air. You are bracing yourself to a heroic resolve. The preacher's voice, like ceaseless music, is still thrilling down through the avenues of your soul. When the critic comes and in pity asks you—" Do you really think that a good sermon ? " he compassionates your poor judgment, leads you to the library, takes down a volume of Lehmkuhl or Suarez, and with a triumphant wave of his hand assures you that every idea in that sermon may be found there.

You are now face to face with the most perplexing of sophistries—the half truth.

Your judgment is staggered by two apparently contradictory facts—it was a fine sermon, yet every idea may be found in the theological treatise.

To enable you to extricate yourself from the puzzle, ratify your first opinion and confound the critic ; picture another set of circumstances.

You stand before St. Peter's, wrapped in admiration at this world's wonder.

> " Power, glory, strength and beauty, all are aisled
> In this eternal ark of worship undefiled."

You are marvelling how did human brains conceive and human hands embody this mighty dream of art. One of the pest tribe yclept " critic " comes pitying your simple heart ; he leads you to a quarry, and triumphantly pointing says : " Here every stone of that building was found. Now, what becomes of the glory simple people like you bestow on Bramante and Michael Angelo ? " How would you answer him ? Easily enough. Make him a present of the quarry, and ask him to produce another St. Peter's. The challenge is conclusive. You have him impaled.

Come back now to the library. Present the preacher's critic with a hundred tomes, give him all this raw material multiplied ten times over out of which that masterpiece of sacred eloquence was built, and ask him to enthral those thousands that hung spellbound on that man's lips, whose thrilled hearts were aflame, who left the church examining their consciences and vowing better lives. Alas ! he who was so eloquent in tearing others to rags when he

himself essays their task himself—angels well might weep.

No department of life is secure against this sophistry.

You listen till you are dazed with admiration at one of those masterpieces of forensic pleading that have flung a deathless glory around the names of Russell and Whiteside ; but the critic, with a superior toss of his head, assures you that this can be found in Magna Charta and the Statute book. Here is the tantalising half truth.

To be sure the principles and groundwork of reasoning are there ; but the office of the advocate was to draw them from the dust and darkness, to gather these scattered articles, statutes and precedents into his capacious brain, and from them evolve a framework of argument to fit his purpose. He moulds them into an impregnable bulwark of law and reasoning to shelter his client. So naturally does he bend them to his case that every listener is impressed with the conviction that surely the framers of these statutes and principles must have a case like this before their minds when they committed them to parchment.

Yet in the judgment of the critic the variety of talents brought to this complex task count for nothing.

Here we see what a distinction must be made between the office of theologian and preacher, and what a confusion of thought is saved by keeping this line of demarcation in view.

Parting advice

Now that the subject of pulpit oratory is swept clear from misleading theories and set in its true light before the young preacher's eyes, let us see how further we can assist him to discharge his high office with honour and efficiency.

1.—Be natural in development

"To thine own self be true" is the soundest of advices.

From the beginning the young preacher should aim at developing on his own lines, thinking in his own way and expressing his thoughts in their own native dress. No matter how eminent the paragon you admire, do not become an understudy of him. Remember he is great only because he is himself and not the imitation of another. Try, however, to get at the secret of his greatness. What is it? He discovered his strong points and cultivated them. Go and do likewise.

You see a man with clear sequence of ideas and easy expression, but without those exceptional gifts that go to make the born orator. He could attain even eminence as a lecturer or instructor, but lecture or instruct he will not.

for he has read Ventura and become smitten. He tries to imitate the Padre's lofty style, and succeeds in " amazing the unlearned and making the learned smile." " Failure " is written large over all his efforts.

David could not fight with the gorgeous but cumbersome arms of Saul : with his own homely sling and the polished stone from the brook, the weapon to which he was accustomed, he achieved victory.

I knew a priest who had a marvellous charm as a storyteller. He invested the merest trifles of incident with resistless fascination. Hours in his society flew like moments.

He became a distinguished preacher. I went to hear him, and quickly discovered the secret of his success. He knew his strong point, and staked his all on it. He preached his sermons as he told his stories—in graphic, familiar narrative. The congregation felt they were taken into his confidence ; they were hypnotised. You forgot that you were sitting in stiff dignity in a church, and imagined yourself one of a group around the winter's log listening to a delightful *raconteur*, and you willingly surrendered to the pleasing delusion.

Every play of fancy, every flash of thought, every clinched conviction passed from him to

his hearers till the souls of preacher and listeners became like reflecting mirrors. There was always regret when he finished.

Now, had that man attempted to become Demosthenes instead of himself he would have succeeded in becoming ridiculous.

2.—Be natural in composition

The natural outpouring of thought has a relish and a resistlessness of force that no art can rival. The scent of a sprig of wild woodbine holds a charm beyond all the perfumes of the chemist's shop.

In order to be natural there is no necessity to ignore the elegancies of style ; for what is style ? *Le style est l'homme.* The style is the man. A perfect style, then, is attained when the written page is the exact expression of the train of thought as it lies in the writer's head. A style is absolutely perfect when it is absolutely natural.

Artificial embroidery, purple patches, and golden vapour are often the defects and not the perfection of style.

Language can be simple, however, without being vulgar or commonplace.

What book will ever equal the Bible for simplicity, yet what dignity ? What preacher ever approached Our Divine Lord ; and, humanly speaking, what was the source of His strength ?

He accommodated Himself to His hearers. From the open book of nature He made the realms of grace familiar to the minds of children. He pointed to the lilies of the field, to the ravens of the wood, to the ripening bud and the angry cloud. "*Ut ex iis quae animus novit, surgat ad incognita quae non novit.*"*

He used the world around us to lift our thoughts to the world above us.

When He spoke to fishermen His illustrations were taken from seas and nets. When He preached to farmers the word of God was the seed falling on rocky soil or the fertile furrow. When the merchants with caravans and silken tunics surrounded Him it becomes the pearl of great price. When amongst simple villagers it is the lost groat in search of which the housewife sweeps the floor and searches each nook and cranny.

Here is language coming down to the level of every hearer, abounding in familiar pictures, yet never losing dignity.

While composing sermons for factory hands Cardinal Wiseman employed a weaver to teach him the technicalities of the loom that he might reach their hearts through the only channel of thought they understood.

* Third Nocturn for Non-Virgins.

It is wonderful how the natural world around us can be used to bring even the most sublime truths within the grasp of the plainest intellects. Why do we not draw more frequently and more abundantly from this source ?

When we hear of a man whose discourses " are too sublime for the ordinary intelligence " it is hard to forbear a smile. Our pity goes out not to " the ordinary intelligence," but to the cloudy dweller in Patmos. Mystic obscurity is used more frequently as a cloak for muddle-headed thinking than as a robe with which to drape sublimity of thought. Hence, if people do not understand the preacher, blame not the people, but let the preacher look to it.

Our nimble-minded imaginative people will rise to and grasp the most elevated ideas if properly presented.

I listened to a sermon in an English church preached before a congregation of Irish poor. The keynote was lofty, but beautifully sustained throughout. The range of thought was high, but the truths clarified by an abundance of happy illustration. That discourse was so classic in its beauty that it might be preached before an Oxford audience, yet not an idea was lost on that breathless congregation, where every female head was covered by a shawl. The

speaker possessed in an eminent degree three gifts that must command success :—He could think clearly; he could so express his thoughts that his language became the mirror of his mind; he made a large demand on the familiar scenes of nature with which to illustrate his ideas and send his reasoning home; he possessed a mind at once logical and imaginative and a manner of expression that formed a definition of perfect style—*Le style c'est l'homme*—the style is the man.

3.—Be natural in delivery

The faintest suspicion of art immediately sets your audience up in arms. Their teeth are on edge; their heart locked against you. "This is acting and not preaching" seals your fate.

Do not imagine for a moment that I advocate the neglect of elocutionary graces. So far from that I hold that every young priest leaving college should be a past master of all rhetorical arts. Gesture, articulation, voice production and inflection should be at his finger tips. No book on the subject should be unread. No year of college life should pass without contributing materially towards the elocutionary equipment of the future preacher. The college that neglects this training and permits young men to go into the ministry without this needful art is guilty of a most serious sin of omission.

What I do mean is *preach* your sermons and do not *declaim* them. How is this accomplished ?

For the first year bend all your powers to capturing the intellects of your auditors, holding in reserve, for the time being, the elocutionary forces. Then, when you have acquired the habit of convincing the intelligence, let the elegancies of finished declamation insinuate themselves gradually into your delivery. Thus art will so engraft itself on nature, the rhetorical graces so entwining and dovetailing into your convictions and passions that they will appear as growing out of and not added on to them. Here is perfection—

Ars artium celare artem.

Reverse this : make declamation your first concern, and let us even suppose the artificiality is not detected, which is supposing a great deal. What is the result ? Your sermon is declamation and nothing else. This means failure, for no matter how the passions are aroused, if they are not upheld by the pillars of conviction, your finest effort is a fire of chips : a blaze for a moment, then ashes.

Though elocutionary powers are of so much importance as to be almost indispensable, yet they are subordinate to the sermon : they are

the aids and auxiliaries to drive it home. A graceful gesture or musical inflection of voice will not convince the intellect or move the passions : they are not the arrows : they lend wings of fire, however, to send the arrows to the mark.

I know no more fatal blunder, or one that militates more strongly against a speaker, than the adoption of an artificial accent.

The Irish gift of oratory

God has not only given our race a special mission—the apostolate of the English-speaking world—but he has singularly endowed us with those gifts that go to make successful preachers of His Word—logical minds, imagination and sensibility.

Logical minds

That we possess this in an eminent degree is evident from a striking fact. There are three avocations to which the faculty of close reasoning is a first essential—law, politics and theology—and in each of these our countrymen excel.

Law

We are as essentially a race of lawyers as the Jews are a race of moneylenders.

For eleven years I watched the sons of Irish parents going from an Australian college to professional careers. Ninety-eight per cent., following the natural bent of their minds, turned to the lawyer's office.

From the year 1858 to the present hour the

robes of Victoria's Chief Justice have been uninterruptedly worn by Irishmen. From 1873 the Chief Justiceship of New South Wales has been exclusively held by sons of the green isle. But, above all, turn to the lawyers' streets in the new worlds of America and Australia and see the amazing number of brass plates adorned with O's and Mac's.

Politics

The political organisations in the labour world of England to-day are mainly captained by Irishmen. Two of them have been sent to Parliament, and two more will probably join them in the next Parliament.

The rapidity with which the Irish emigrant, following the law of natural selection, plunges into politics has passed into a proverb in America and furnished a humorous parody on a well-known stanza :—

"There came to the beach a poor exile of Erin,
The dew on his thin robe was heavy and chill,
The ship that had brought him scarce from harbour was steerin',
When Senator Mike was presenting a Bill."

Theology

The great Cardinal Franzelin said to one of his most distinguished pupils *—"As a professor of theology at Rome for many years I had every day opportunities of studying the character and

* Dr. Croke, late Archbishop of Cashel.

mental equipment of various nations, and, though in favour of the Germans, I give it as my opinion that the Irish, as a race, have the most theological minds of any people." Judgment from such an authority is conclusive.

The first essential for a preacher is the power of lucid reasoning. That this faculty is ours is now abundantly established. The next talent requisite is imagination. That we have imagination, often teeming in tropical luxuriance, but shared in great or less degree by all, has never been questioned. One more requisite and the oratorical outfit is complete.

Sensibility

On this score it is sufficient to say that we are Celts, endowed with the ardent nervous temperaments. But suffering has given to ours an acute refinement that nothing else could impart.

"Never soul could know its powers
Until sorrow swept its chords."

"We give preference to Jews and Irishmen on our staff," said the proprietor of a leading journal. "Both have suffered, and a man with a grievance writes passionately. He dips the pen into his own heart and electric energy thrills his sentences; hence the crisp pungency and compressed fire of our columns."

What gift that goes to make an orator has God denied us? Reason, fancy, passion, a

pathos and humour where the smile trembles on the borderland of tears.

Why then this barrenness ? Mainly because of the criminal neglect of colleges in the past to cultivate the abundant material placed at their disposal ; other contributory causes are cynical criticism and want of courageous ambition.

Colleges are now bestirring themselves—it is high time—but criticism has not died. Refined natures have heartstrings like the chords of Æolian harps, sensitive to the faintest touch, responsive to the gentlest whisper of the evening breeze ; such shrink in terror from the icy breath of the scoffer : the purpose is frozen dead within their souls. O criticism ! what crimes have been committed in your name ! How many noble careers have you blasted ?

The world's greatest orators

The man without ambition is not worth his salt. Some of the world's greatest orators have been spurred on to triumph despite difficulties before which timid men would stand aghast.

The story of Demosthenes is too familiar to bear repetition.

A good voice and commanding presence are powerful auxiliaries towards oratorical success ; but Curran's appearance was so mean that he was once taken for a shoeblack. His stammering, blunders, and collapses in early life earned for

him the nickname of "Orator Mum." Yet to what a lofty eminence did not his sleepless endeavours lift him!

If Sheil's portraits speak truly he must have closely resembled a starved sweep on a wet day, while Disraeli declares his voice was as unmusical as the sound of a broken tin whistle. Of him Lecky writes :—"Richard Lalor Shiel forms one of the many examples history presents of splendid oratorical powers clogged by insuperable natural defects. His person was diminutive and wholly devoid of dignity. His voice shrill, harsh, and often rising to a positive shriek. His action, when most natural, violent, without gracefulness, and eccentric even to absurdity."*

In spite of these defects, and at a period when the nation's ear was pampered to fastidiousness by the eloquence of Grattan, Flood and O'Connell, he began his upward struggle towards eminence. He not only succeeded in winning a foremost place, but in wreathing himself with deathless fame when laurels shaded the brows of giants alone.

In face of these encouraging examples who could lose heart when the trumpet of ambition blows—"struggle, struggle, struggle."

"Scorn delights and live laborious days."

* Lecky—"Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland," p. 194.

CHAPTER SIXTH

THE ART OF ELOCUTION

The subject of preaching would be incomplete without a chapter on the important and graceful art of elocution.

What books should we read?

If asked what works would a student read on the subject, the wisest answer would be, every book he can lay hold of. The number of works dealing with rhetoric are few, but if a man can get half-a-dozen new ideas from any one of them his labour is more than repaid. Even should he meet the same thought repeated, the fact that it is clothed in different language and set in a new light invests it with a freshness that is sure to fix it permanently in his mind.

If, however, the question be narrowed down to which are the three best books on this subject? without pretending to give a decisive answer to this difficult question we have no hesitation in saying that, for the ecclesiastical student, "Potter's Sacred Eloquence," "The Making of an Orator," by

Mr. John O'Connor Power, and Mr. McHardy Flint's little work, "Natural Elocution," will be found most useful.

Some of the thoughts in this chapter are borrowed from the last two authors.

With this general acknowledgment both gentlemen will, we are sure, be content when we spare the reader repeated references to either titles or pages of their works.

What is rhetoric?

At the threshold of our subject we are met by the question—What is rhetoric? Mr. Power gives the answer—"The resources of rhetoric are natural resources, and rules for composition are only records intended for the guidance of those who have not discovered the originals for themselves. The first speakers had no rules and no experience to draw upon but their own. In course of time speeches came to be reported, and then the secret of their eloquence disclosed itself. All the qualities of the orator were then observed; the highest and the best were chosen and combined and erected into an art, which was named Rhetoric. This art was designed to *aid* speakers and not as a means of *fettering their natural ability*."

Cicero

Cicero has put almost the same thoughts in different words—"I consider that, with regard to all precept, the case is this; not that orators

by adhering to them have obtained distinction in eloquence, but that certain persons have noticed what men of eloquence have practised of their own accord, and formed rules accordingly ; *so that eloquence has not sprung from art, but art from eloquence.*" This is not only sound theory, but sound sense. It shatters a time-worn fallacy and gives hope and encouragement to the student. Every man can become an orator in a greater or a less degree. The powers slumber within him ; and the teacher's duty is not to create but awaken, draw out, develop and guide these inborn gifts.

Now, the question is—By what standard shall the speaker be trained ? The master-hand of Shakespere has framed a set of rules that will stand for all time as the most pregnant piece of wisdom ever penned on the art of elocution. Though Hamlet's advice is addressed to actors, there is scarcely a line which the young orator can afford to ignore. He would do well to commit the entire piece to memory.

Shakespere's advice to speakers

" Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue ; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand thus : but use all gently ; for in the very

torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who, for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance, o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play—and heard others praise, and that highly—not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the

accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably."

Avoid extremes

It will be well to observe that throughout this advice the poet is careful to warn us against extremes—neither to tear a passion to rags nor to be too tame—he insists on moderation. Even in the very tempest of passion one must not lose self-control nor make extravagant use of the hands. The "overdone" and the "come tardy off" are the two poles to be shunned.

"Speak the speech as I pronounced it." By placing the two words "speak" and "pronounce" in contrast, Hamlet leads us to infer that in reading the play over for the actors his principal care was to give perfect articulation. "Speak the speech as I *pronounced* it."

"Trippingly on the tongue." Evidently the slow, thick utterance of the mumbling speaker, to the roof of whose mouth the words seem to cling, was not unknown in Shakespere's day. As a remedy against this he tells them to "speak it trippingly." No word in the English language could so clearly convey the case. Nimble, airy resonance is suggested by the very sound of the word "trippingly."

Two errors

Having given this advice he hastens to warn them against the opposite extreme: "But if you mouth it." He wants no boisterous notes of artificial passion: he would as lief the town-crier spoke his lines. The office of that humble functionary demands not the graces of finished elocution, only strong lungs with which to shout; hence a piece of delicate pathos or varied passions would probably receive scant justice at his hands. But even the town-crier is tolerable—he is nature's product—compared with the workmanship of nature's journeymen—those who strut and bellow. "They imitate humanity so abominably" that their delivery touches the extremest limit of all that is reprehensible in elocution.

Gesture

"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action." Here we have the fundamental law for the use of gesture.

Gesture is not an artificial action standing apart from, or added to, the words. It is thought seeking spontaneous, visible, outward expression through the movements of the hand or eye or features just at the moment when that same thought is receiving articulate birth on the tongue. Its purpose is to make the words grow large, as it were; to expand and emphasise their meaning; hence the wisdom of the advice—

"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action." If the action distract the listeners' attention from the word its purpose is defeated.

Now that we have an idea of what elocution is, and analysed the wisest set of rules ever framed for its government, we turn to the mechanical agencies by which it is produced—breathing, resonance, inflection.

How to inhale

When a person draws in the air through the mouth, the cold, unpurified stream strikes directly on the back of the roof, causing dryness and irritation. To avoid this the preacher, except when actually engaged in speaking, should inhale through the nose. The advantages of so doing are considerable. The air inhaled through the nasal organs is drawn over the roof of the mouth and soft palate, and thus warmed by contact with the blood-vessels; so that it is rendered innoxious by the time it reaches the throat. Again, any particles of dust or other impurities it might contain are caught by the filterers or hairs situated in the nasal cavities for that purpose. Thus it reaches the tender vocal chords both warmed and purified. To these may be added another advantage: it is more becoming to inhale with closed lips—the picture of a speaker gasping open-mouthed is not a graceful one.

How use the lungs

We now come to the important question—How shall I increase my vocal powers? As is well known, there are two methods of inhaling and expelling the air from the lungs. One is by means of the rising and falling of the ribs. This is called "the costal method." The other is by the contraction and distention of the midriff or diaphragm. The diaphragm is the movable floor to the thorax or box that encloses the lungs. This is called "the diaphragmetic method." Now, since God has furnished us with both methods, He evidently intended that we should use both, as we use our two eyes or our two ears. They are given, not as alternative, but as simultaneous instruments of action. The weakness in many a speaker's voice, its want of volume and its failure when a sustained effort is demanded, is due to the fact that he breathes by means of his ribs alone, throwing all the pressure on the upper portion of the lungs, not asking the large areas to contribute anything. He thus robs himself of breathing capacity, and consequently of voice power.

Diaphragmetic breathing

To get a perfect mastery over the "diaphragmetic" method and make it as serviceable as possible, practise breathing while lying on your back, filling the lungs to the utmost, and exhausting them as completely as possible.

Inhale rapidly and exhale slowly. Then reverse the order; inhale slowly and exhale rapidly. Again let "slow" and "rapid" alternately make both movements.

By this exercise you acquire flexibility of the midriff muscles, you enlarge the cubic dimensions of the breathing area, you distribute the burden generally; and when the occasion comes to send your voice over four thousand heads you will discover that the reserve fund of voice and strength acquired by this practice is at your service. This plan bears that highest and safest sanction—*in practical experience it has proved a genuine success.*

A clergyman's sore throat

The ailment known as "a clergyman's sore throat" is too common and too serious to be passed over—the raucous, husky voice sawn across the throat, the congested blood-vessels, the strained muscles, the throat lining as raw as a beefsteak. Here you have evident results of some unnatural effort. What is it? In ordinary conversation we employ the throat, back of the mouth and vocal chords mainly: very little demand is made on the lungs. The voice we use is the "head voice." Now, when called on to fill a large building, the centre of stress should instantly be shifted from the mouth and throat to the lungs. On them the

whole weight should be flung—then you produce the "chest voice." It is the want of this transference of strain from the throat to the lungs that causes the misery called "a clergyman's sore throat." Men endeavour to fill a large building with precisely the same set of organs that they use when speaking by the fireside. The strain intended for the broad-based, strong-fibred lungs is kept on the delicate vocal chords, palate and throat. These were never built for that purpose, and nature kicks against the outrage. The throat becomes congested, parched, torn and raw; the voice grows husky, cracked, and finally ends in a scream. Here is the genesis of the fatal "clergyman's sore throat" explained.

An illustration

Analogy makes this clearer still. Our back teeth were built for the purpose of grinding; hence their broad crowns, strong shafts, and firm roots; the teeth in the front of the mouth were intended for tasks not at all so arduous. Tamper with this arrangement; transfer the laborious work of mastication to the front teeth, and see how nature will punish you. This illustrates the outrage committed when the strain and effort that should be shifted to the lungs are allowed to rest on the slender organs intended for the entirely different purpose of modulation.

How acquire a chest voice

One question remains—How can a person cultivate a chest voice? How bring the voice directly from the lungs without in the least distressing the throat? This is all important. The young speaker should practise for a short time daily the method of lifting, first, words and then sentences straight from the lungs without making the least possible demand on the throat or vocal chords, stealing each word out of the depths of the lungs, afraid, as it were, of awakening the upper organs. When he has acquired this habit of speaking words and sentences, let him practise a verse or two of declamation. In a short time he will be surprised at his progress in acquiring a chest voice. In public speaking it will become his ordinary voice; for not only does the established habit assist him, but the organs daily develop and fit themselves to his purpose, and he learns to transfer the stress from his throat to his lungs as easily and quickly and instinctively as the pianist passes his fingers from the treble to the base notes on the keyboard.

The test of any theory is—How has it worked in practice? The method of voice production here recommended has given the writer advantages that it would be difficult to overestimate. Lungs naturally weak grew

to three times their former size and strength ; his voice increased in depth, richness and resonance ; though constantly speaking in large churches for years, he has never known what hoarseness, sore throat or huskiness is.

A method that to him has been worth untold gold may not be without advantage to his readers.

Resonance

We must, however, have more than speech ; we must have musical speech. This is acquired by resonance and inflection.

To send a stream of air from the lungs and vocalise it on its outward passage is not enough ; by this you produce only a tiny, impoverished voice that conveys no force and awakens no emotion. There is something wanting ; that something is—Resonance. It supplies richness and effectiveness to the stream of sound.

An illustration

The difference between speech stripped of resonance and accompanied with it is best illustrated by a simple experiment. Take a violin-string in your hand : touch it, and mark the sound produced—how weak and thin. Now, attach the string to the violin : touch it again, and see how the resonating instrument converts the feeble sound of the detached string into a sonorous wave of vibrating music. Now, the vocal chords are placed in the throat

midway between two resonators—the chest and the head. These are to the chords what the body of the violin is to the string. When the stream of air has passed the chords it is already accompanied by the vibrations of the chest, but the head is the main contributor. The residual air in the upper portions of the throat, mouth and nasal cavities is thrown into vibration.

Here the importance of the subject reveals itself. The art that can convert a screech into pleasing cadences of soft sound is no trifle. Nasal resonance must not be confounded with nasal twang. The one is produced by vibrating the air in the cavities, the twang by expelling it from them. The part played by each organ in voice production may be briefly summarised :—The lungs send out a stream of air ; the vocal chords, principally, modulate it; the head and chest give it resonance.

Now, that it is clearly evident God intended us to speak and sing to the accompaniment of these aërial orchestras concealed in the head and chest, the only remaining question is—How we shall use them ?

Take care never to exhaust these reservoirs of air ; if you do the result will be screech and shout. No matter what demand is made on

Advice how to avoid screech

you, be sure to hold a reserve supply of residual air : set it vibrating, and your voice on its outward passage will receive an enrichment of volume, force, and music.

Inflection: its necessity

"Go slowly and articulate well" are not sufficient. "Inflect your language" must be added. A student should practise assiduously till his sentences become as flexible as a cutting whip, capable of being bent to every mood and of lending themselves to every passion. In pathos his words should sink almost to a sob, tearful in their plaintiveness ; in denunciation they should rise, muttering the voices of the storms ; and in narrative the proper pitch is ordinary middle tone.

French and English want inflection

It is in this want of inflective grace that English, and more especially French, speakers lose so much of their force. Both read admirably and articulate with precision, but the unvaried straight line tone, so suited to reading, will not serve the purpose when we not only wish to make people understand, but also endeavour to move their passions.

The secret power of a good story-teller

Recall a good story-teller or speaker of whom you never wearied ; go back in memory and see how much he owed to the power contained in the inflected voice—the varied tones that sank or swelled as suited the mood or passion.

As you sat by the winter's fire your flesh was made to creep and your hair stood on end in terror while you furtively stole a glance around looking for the apparition described in the weird ghost story. The secret power that somewhere lay enthralled you. Was it not in the husky whisper or the hush of restraint? Let that speaker tell the same story in the middle pitched narrative tone, and lo! the spell is vanished. If the thunder thrills that rocked and vibrated through his voice were taken from Demosthenes, would he have ever driven Eschines into exile?

Two advantages of inflection

The practice of varied cadences in speech has two genuine advantages—*it saves the speaker from fatigue and the hearers from weariness.*

When a man varies his tone of voice he breaks up the arrangement in the group of muscles that till then bore the stress of effort: a new combination is formed, and the work transferred to fresh muscles. This brings instant relief. A similar sense of refreshment comes to his hearers.

In speaking, as in singing, we must have melody, but there is no melody without variety. People would rush even from a Melba if she sang every note in the same key. Inflection not only constitutes the melody of speech, but

imparts to it rhetorical significance and logical force.

The want of success in many a speaker who has both a good voice and good matter may be found in the fact that his voice, instead of being as flexible as a piece of whalebone, is as unbending as a bar of iron; or, worse still, perhaps he adopts the dreary monotony of the sing-song tone: the two unvarying notes so suggestive of the up and down movements of a pump-handle. This "cuckoo" tone would blight the best written sermon.

Two impediments to good preaching

Nothing now remains except to warn the young preacher against the two most common defects—affectation of voice and word-dropping at the end of the sentences.

"Preach," says Dr. Ireland, "in a manner that the people will understand, and that goes straight to their hearts, and not in the stilted phraseology of the seventeenth century sermon." Sage advice! The comic stage has set the world laughing at the grotesque inflections of the parson preacher; but is his counterpart never found amongst ourselves. Is the Catholic pulpit free from speakers whose ridiculous cadences at once class them amongst the disciples of the Rev. Mr. Spalding?

An artificial tone of voice

We have met priests, typical of a considerably

large class, who, in ordinary conversation, could speak in a manner both natural and pleasing; who, when roused, could be even eloquently convincing; who, at the dinner-table and even on the platform, are listened to with pleasure, yet let one of them go into a pulpit, and fifteen minutes exhausts the patience of the most charitable congregation. Should he exceed this limit there are suppressed sighs and ominous consulting of watches. Why? Because in the pulpit he adopts an artificial tone of voice. In some instances it takes the shape of a pious whine, in others of a drone. But in whatever shape it finds expression the hollow ring of the unreal is there to damn it.

Artificiality means failure

A hoary tradition made it venerable in his eyes. As a boy he heard it from a pastor to whom he was accustomed to look with reverence.

How he came to acquire it

He came to persuade himself that, like a "judge's gravity" or a "soldier's step," a priest too should bear a professional hall-mark, and this should be a "preacher's voice," so he acquired it. Fatal acquisition!

The peculiarity of it is that this tone is reserved exclusively for the pulpit. Not a whisper of it heard during the week. It is his "preaching voice," and like his "preaching

stole" or "preaching surplice" it is laid aside till Sunday brings him again before the congregation.

The result of the artificial tone

What madness! Adopting this tone is like drawing the lead from the pistol or putting a foil on the rapier: it defeats his purpose, it renders his weapon ineffective. So far from setting his congregation on fire he sets them asleep; instead of sending them away with clenched convictions they leave the church tittering, or perhaps in bad t mper.

Priests never use in moments of serious issues

I would like to ask such a man—If you were pleading in a court for your character or before an angry mob for your life is it on this antiquated weapon you would rely? Would not nature's unerring instinct tell you to fling it to the winds and stake your fortunes on the untrammeled outpouring of head and heart? Every tone would ring with earnestness: every sentence thrill with passion.

The thoughts, how clear! How convincing the arguments! Nature's unfettered strength would then, like a tidal wave, sweep you triumphantly onward to the goal.

Yet when you stand in the pulpit to plead a brief for Christ the simple, unaffected earnestness that everywhere else carries conviction is abandoned for such a musty instru-

ment as an unctuous whine or a holy drone. The young priest should avoid it : it spells ruin.

Voice dropping

It is wonderful how few the speakers are who sustain the same pitch and energy of voice from the beginning of a sentence to its closing syllable.

Cause of the defect

The temptation to exhaust the air in the lungs, and therefore permit the final words to drop, is so strong that unless a student watch it and assiduously guard against it he will discover that he has fallen victim to this weak point before he is twelve months a priest.

It destroys a sermon

Whenever you hear the last words of each sentence of a sermon growing faint, like Marathon runners staggering feebly towards the goal, and the final word dropping completely under, that sermon, no matter how beautiful its conception or eloquent its composition, is doomed to failure.

The entire meaning of many a sentence is completely lost if the last words fail to reach the listeners' ears. Very often the last word is the important member of a sentence, the others being merely ancillary to it. In oratory, especially, many a sentence has to depend for its driving force on the energy with which the final words are sent home.

Now, when people give a preacher attentive

interest, the least they are entitled to expect is that he should let them hear every word. But finding themselves invariably baffled by the last word becoming inaudible, it is small wonder if, tantalised and disgusted, they abandon all effort to follow him.

The cure

It is therefore of great importance that this defect, so fatal yet so common, should be provided against in time. But how ?

Since it comes from exhaustion, consequent on the mismanagement of the voice, the remedy is obvious.

Let the student daily practise reading aloud in the open air, preferably sermons or speeches by the best authors.

Let him nervously guard against allowing his voice to show the slightest trace of fatigue in the final words of each sentence. This can be accomplished by inhaling fully, going slowly, and not only giving full value to the punctuation stops, but resting at the rhetorical and logical pauses.

Advantages of the remedy

By this excellent practice he strengthens his lungs and vocal organs, cultivates his ear, and acquires a control over his voice so perfect that he can husband his reserve fund of breath and strength to impart at will freshness to the final syllable.

This practice should be continued till it becomes a rooted habit, till it has grown to be his normal method of speaking.

When he goes into the pulpit I would give him an advice, the value of which time and experience can alone enable him to appreciate.

Direct your voice not to the end of the church, but to the side wall about three-quarters way down from the pulpit to the door. Fix your eye on some person there; to him address your sermon, but pitch your voice against the wall about two feet above his head.

By this plan you not only secure your voice against unnecessary fatigue, but you take the surest method of sending it into every ear, and the reverberations of your own voice will act electrically on you.

As ring after ring of your sentences comes back from the sounding spot against which you have discharged them you are filled with courageous confidence and an assurance that every word has found its mark.

A recent writer in the *Quarterly Review* discloses in one luminous sentence the qualities that go to make an orator, and every priest should struggle with all his might to be an orator in the best sense of the word.

He says: "Nor is any man a great orator who has not many of the gifts of a great actor—his command of gesture, his variety and grace of elocution, his mobility of features, his instant sympathy with the ethical tone of this or that situation, his power of evoking that sympathy in every member of his audience; and this is surely what Demosthenes meant by making acting not action the secret of all oratory."

What a vista these words open up! What a variety of accomplishments demanded that can only be acquired, even by the most gifted, by long study and patient practice! And since learning to speak in public is like learning to swim, or to skate, or to ride a bicycle, in this sense at least, that no amount of previous theoretical instruction will enable one to realise the initial difficulties or find out how to overcome them without actual experiment, it would be arrant folly on the part of the future priest to neglect this subject during his student years.

These questions—Culture, English, and Preaching—should occupy a foremost place in the curricula of our colleges. It is only by training the student from the start, by fostering literary, dramatic and debating societies where

not alone the practical art of speaking is developed, but the social amenities of good society are practised, that the young priest can be equipped to efficiently discharge the high office awaiting him, and so reflect a lasting credit on the Church of God at home and abroad.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

THE DANGER OF THE HOUR. HOW TO MEET IT

Statement of the case

THE printing press is one of the greatest forces of the modern world. The multitude of publications sent forth on its wings each morning are messengers of light or darkness. Their influence for good or evil is more powerful than that of armies or parliaments: that influence we can no more escape than we can escape the sunlight or the air that surrounds us. It penetrates our homes; it colours our thoughts; it furnishes motives for our actions. The Press is indeed the lever that moves the world of our day, and we are but the puppets of its will.

Such being the case, is it not a question of first importance for the priest to examine its bearing on his own life, and on the lives of those committed to his care?

A general principle

That we may do so in a scientific manner, let us take a simple general principle. Reading is the food of the mind. Now, the body is

marvellously influenced by the food it assimilates ; give a man wholesome nutriment and mark the bounding vigour of his blood, the activity and healthy development of every organ ; feed him on innutritious food and the most robust must fade ; on poisonous food and the strongest languishes unto death.

The substance of the body is so influenced by what it assimilates that scientists assure us, young animals fed on madder will reproduce the purple dye of the plant in the very texture of the bone.

With far greater thoroughness and completeness does thought act upon the mind : thought blends with thought with a force and subtleness unknown in matter. Watch the principle in action. Let any man habitually read good books—and by good books I mean the production of any person whose mind is illumined by faith and whose heart is fed by the sacraments—it matters little in what shape such books reach us, let it be a novel or a book of poems or essays. No man can invariably read such works without growing imperceptibly better. His Catholic principles grow more robust ; he becomes more fearless in expressing them ; each volume leaves an aroma behind and imparts a new flavour to his life. Fresh oil is poured into the lamp of

The principle illustrated

his piety, its flame burns brighter, he feels an unction in his prayers; he has a holy relish for the sacraments. His very interests in life change: he looks on everything with supernatural eyes, he becomes touchy about the interests of the Church, anxious about the foreign missions, and feels an insult to the Holy See as a wound.

The food his brain is living on is leavening his whole life, giving colour, tone and trend to his existence.

This literature, on which he nourishes himself, has been admirably described by the master-mind of Catholic America—Dr. Brownson :— Brownson

"Catholic literature is robust and healthy of a ruddy complexion, and full of life. It knows no sadness but the sadness of sin, and it rejoices for evermore. It eschews melancholy as the devil's best friend on earth, abhors the morbid sentimentality which feeds upon itself and grows by what it feeds upon. . . . It washes its face, anoints its head, puts on its festive robe, goes forth into the fresh air, the bright sunshine; and, when occasion requires, rings out the merry laugh that does one's heart good to hear. It is on principle that the Catholic approves such gladsome and smiling literature." *

* Vol. xix., p. 155.

Now look at the converse picture. Let the mind of the most devout Catholic feed on the writings of the Protestant or sensualist and mark the transformation. See how his soul becomes enervated, his judgment warped and his heart invaded by every temptation. His Catholic principles insensibly vanish, and the standards of paganism replace them. The light of the supernatural dies in his eyes, a film of clay overspreads his vision; he looks on the Church through coloured lenses, and the rankness of earth is upon his life.

Thus our thoughts, views and actions are marvellously coloured and influenced by the books we read.

The English press operating on the Irish mind

Let us now turn to examine how this bears on our own lives and the lives of those around us.

Thick as snowflakes, but without their whiteness, the sensuous and infidel Press of England is discharging its messengers of evil on this land. It is speaking by a multitude of tongues into the hearts of our people. The sensational novel, the suggestive picture paper, the trashy magazine are breathing a deadly blight over the soul of Ireland: they whisper thoughts that fall like corrosive poison into the sanctuary of young hearts, destroying the only jewels that are

worthy of being there enshrined—bright faith and pure morals.

What the Londoner saw

An Irishman residing in London, after visiting his native country in 1900, records his impressions :—

"I have been amazed during recent visits to Ireland at the display of London weekly publications, while Dublin publications of a similar kind were difficult to obtain. I have seen the counters of newsagents in such towns as Waterford, Limerick, Kilkenny and Galway piled as thickly, and with as varied a selection of these London weekly journals as in Lambeth or Islington. . . . I was so impressed with the phenomenon that I endeavoured when in Dublin to obtain some accurate information in regard to its extent. At Messrs. Eason's I was told that within the past ten years the circulation of these journals in Ireland had almost quadrupled, although the population had diminished within the same period by one-eighth." *

This is the offal the national mind is feeding on, and yet people express surprise that we are becoming West-British and losing Catholic thought and character.

It is estimated that, without counting the

* Mr. MacDonagh in "Nineteenth Century," July, 1900.

book or parcel post, every week there are three tons of this literature discharged on the quays of Dublin alone. If this is even approximately true it reveals a startling condition of things.

It may well be questioned whether the bayonets of Cromwell or the plantations of James threatened more destruction to all we hold dear. I believe they were as toy armies compared with the silent foe now encamped upon the soil.

Out of these three tons it would be easy to count, not the volumes, but the pages, devoted to a defence of the Ten Commandments. Works of open or professed assault on faith or morals are as yet few, the time is not ripe just yet, their forerunners are here, however, the ground is being prepared. The advance guards have come, and it is only a question of time till the heavy ordnance is planted in our midst.

Our present danger has been admirably described by an eminent prelate :—" A mass of literature which professes to be innocent, and ostensibly aims at being interesting, but seeks to create that interest and engross attention by fostering thoughts that appeal to the passions with no uncertain voice. Even when such works do not openly attack faith or the sanctity of morals, they seek to convey the

Cardinal Logue

subtle poison of unbelief or corruption by covert insinuation, by ridicule, by ignoring religious truth and supernatural motives as unworthy of consideration, more effectually and fatally, than they would have done by open and undisguised assault." *

There are novels that constitute an unbroken attack, from the first page to the last, against some divine truth, yet with such a delicate hand is the insidious poison distributed that you may be challenged to lay your finger on a single objectionable passage. Satan has not been studying the human heart for six thousand years without knowing it well. He takes very good care not to label his drugs, or present his poison to timid minds in large doses ; hence there is no alarm : but the treacherous danger of such books is well illustrated by a tree to be found in tropical forests.

The Tropical tree

In early autumn it is ablaze with sheaves of fairest pink ; it warns you off by no repellant odour ; its umbrageous shelter is most inviting ; yet so fatal is the subtle breath with which it charges the air around that should an incautious traveller rest his head for one night under its treacherous shade he would wake no more.

* Cardinal Logue, Lenten Pastoral.

So, the flowery brilliancy of style, the charms and graces of diction of many a modern novel are fascinating, but the pages they adorn exhale a deadly breath.

A sample novel

Let us take a sample novel. The foundation of the State is the family ; the corner-stone on which the family rests is the sacred marriage bond. Dissolve that and you convert social harmony into social chaos. Yet how many books are there which are covert attacks on the marriage tie.

The heroine is generally a married lady who discovers that her husband is not the man she should have married. From this centre-point the web of intrigue is woven. Mawkish sentiment and false pity are aroused. A glamour is thrown over the sins and the sinners. Tears are demanded for libertines and their crimes are gilded. Virtue becomes a tyranny ; the marriage bond an intolerable yoke, and the divorce court—which is truly a vestibule of hell—a haven of relief.

It is unnecessary to trace the effects of such degrading teaching on the lives of the young, whose minds are as wax to receive and marble to retain : how the high standards of virtue taught in the school and strengthened in the home vanish : how the touchy sensitiveness of

the pure soul becomes deadened and a hunger for grosser excitements is awakened.

Now that we have analysed the intellectual food on which our people live let us advance the enquiry one step further and ask—Where must it all end ? St. Thomas answers : " *Nihil volitum nisi cognitum.*" That principle is axiomatic in its truth : the heart will ever follow the head. As you sow in thought you will reap in action. Corrupt a nation's intellect, and as surely as darkness succeeds sunset, as effect follows cause, so surely corruption of that nation's heart must ensue.

The head leads the heart

How clearly the devil understands this and what use has he not made of it !

For the past four hundred years the greatest evils that have afflicted the Church are traceable to a licentious Press. Printing was scarcely invented till Satan seized it for his own purposes. By it the Humanists of the fifteenth century scattered broadcast pagan ideas. The disentombed paganism continued to ferment and rot the hearts of the people till in the next century it burst forth in the deluge of unbridled passions that marked the Reformation.

Voltaire and his disciples did not openly cry " down with the Church," but they took the surest road to level it. They corroded the

France

foundations of Christian belief. By encyclopedias and pamphlets they first attacked with sneer and jibe, the person of the priest, then the sacraments he administered became the butt of their mockery, and they finally flouted the gospel he preached. And while the agents of evil were busy, the good curès of France sounded no trumpet of alarm, but dreamed themselves into the comforting delusion that all would blow over, till the ground under their feet began to rock and heave in the convulsive throes of the Revolution.

The disciples of Satan to-day are sleepless in their endeavours to undermine the faith of Ireland through the same agency; while it is to be feared that some of the guardians of that sacred treasure are inclined to imitate the dreamy lethargy that led to such disastrous results in France.

Look at Europe to-day seething with socialism and anarchy, its huge standing armies scarcely able to hold these worse than barbarian hordes in check. Out of what dark womb have these monsters crept? A corrupt Press. The devil found men whose lives were filled with pain and want; he came breathing through the Press telling them to distrust God, and to make war upon society. The Reformation, the

Europe

Revolution, the social anarchy of to-day are the direct offspring of a licentious Press. Permit a nation's mind to be poisoned, and that nation's heart must rot. *Nihil volitum nisi cognitum.*

Fifty years ago

In proof of this we need not look outside our own shores. Fifty years ago the priests of Ireland often had recourse to rough methods with the people. Even the aid of the "blackthorn" was occasionally invoked as an effective instrument for securing correction or impressing conviction. Yet, on the morrow, all was forgotten; and the people would die for the man who punished them. Let the priest of to-day but thwart the grand-children of that generation, even in a small matter, and mark their rancour. How bitter! how relentless! The Catholic spirit of half a century ago was not operated on by the literature of a nation that is daily losing even the veneer of Christianity.

You may gash a man with healthy blood to the bone, and time will quickly heal the wound and scarcely leave a scar, but if the man's blood be corrupt the scratch of a thorn may involve consequences demanding the surgeon's knife.

The spirit that Catholic Ireland had fifty years ago is sadly changed to-day; and its tendency to fester on slight provocation is due

to the poison distilled into it from an unwholesome, anti-Catholic literature. Only twenty years ago we had a painful illustration of the silent but terrible mischief that has been done by England's Press upon the Catholic mind of this country.

An evil crisis

Up to the time of the Parnell crisis the priests imagined their feet were planted upon a solid rock ; they discovered they were standing on a pie-crust. What a startling revelation was in store for them. Small wonder they rubbed their eyes and asked in bewilderment, Are we in Catholic Ireland ?

The ground broke ; the fiery breath of hell belched forth. We saw the devil spitting hate through the lips of politicians, the columns of the Press, and the resolutions of the schoolmasters. Terrible as was this outward exhibition, it revealed but a fraction. The spirit of revolt and infidelity that raged within the breasts of young men and darkened their conversation was awful. The writings of avowed freethinkers and libertines were devoured, and if any young man had the heroic courage to remonstrate, his words would be drowned in derision.

God permitted that warning to come, but have we taken it as a warning ? What efforts

have we made since to secure the entrenchments? The danger passed, and we sank back into the old, dreamy lethargy, and left the field open to the devil to sow his tares anew. Our greatest danger to-day is our apparent safety. We wrap ourselves into a false security, while a dry rot is permitted to stealthily corrode the pillars of intellectual conviction that must uphold all. Unless this is fought, and fought effectively, the structure of our Catholic life will topple like a house of cards.

All looks calm now, but so long as the causes that produced the sad outburst of twenty years ago continue unchecked, worse inevitably awaits us. I may be told. Look at the union of priests and people to-day; look at our flourishing sodalities and our beautiful churches.

Objections answered

The union of priests and people was then tested by one strong wrench, and it snapped; and so long as the evil forces that caused the fissure continue to gnaw once more the bond that unites the hearts of priests and people, is it stronger you expect that bond to grow?

With regard to our pious sodalities. Did the question ever present itself—How much of the average sodalist's piety is resting on sentiment and tradition, and how little of it on intellectual conviction? Transplant him from the hot-

bed to the ice-chills of infidelity in America or Australia, where the very air is electric with doubt and denial, and when the storm beats upon him, is his head armed to defend his Faith ?

Where could he get the necessary knowledge ? Not from the book in his hand, for it is " Marie Corelli " or " Hall Caine " you find him best acquainted with. Not from the Catholic newspaper, for the question is—Do we possess one ? It is a strange fact that while Irish Catholics abroad have founded, and support, splendid Catholic journals in every land where they have found a home, the mother Church from which they sprang is practically defenceless. He gets poor assistance from the pulpit ; for while homilies and exhortations are admirable in their way, they fall far short of covering the needs of this questioning age. Our dogmatic treatises are permitted to lie entombed in dust on our top shelves, while clear and homely exposition of Catholic truth would be drunk in like honey by the people.

You point to our beautiful churches, beautiful they are indeed. But to what purpose do we raise temples of stone if we permit the living temple of the soul to be eaten into by the poison mildews of evil thought. The Continent is

dotted over with stately but empty basilicas, silent and mournful monuments to a Faith and a love long since departed.

Questions

Now that we begin to realise the danger and the extent of this evil, a number of questions naturally suggest themselves.

1

How is it that the master carefully scrutinizes the character of a servant before admitting her into his house, lest her influence in his home might be for evil, and that same man allows the author to pass in unchallenged? The author comes, not to minister but to master; to impress his thoughts on the minds and perhaps blast the virtue of the children.

2

Since every parent is bound to provide that his children's apartments are well supplied with healthy air, is not the obligation far more serious to take care that the moral atmosphere of the home does not hold the deadliest poisons in solution?

3

Why does not the young girl, who is so fastidious about the class of people with whom she will associate, exercise even ordinary discrimination in the selection of an author? This is the companion whose influence sinks deeper and lasts longer than that of the person with whom she sips tea or takes a walk. He whispers into her soul under the shade of the

midnight lamp. He embeds his principles on her brain. He lives in her dreams. He becomes her oracle to conjure by. Questions

Or, let us put the question this way: How many of the men and women who flit across the pages of modern fiction would a respectable Catholic admit into his home or introduce to his family? He would not give them his company, but he gives them his brains. The hem of his garment they may not touch, but the pith of his life he places at their disposal. Make no mistake about it. You cannot shake off the influence of your author. His thoughts become your thoughts. He weaves himself into the woof of your mind. 4

How is it that when the proselytiser comes to your parish in human shape you are all afire, but when he comes speaking, not by one but a hundred tongues, silently but effectively sapping the Faith or virtue of your flock, no pulpit rings with denunciation? All these questions may be answered by another most pertinent to the priest. 5

Have the people been taught to realise the danger confronting them? Have their consciences been awakened? Have we been dumb watch-dogs while they are being devoured?

The treatment of this subject would be Apologies

incomplete if the stock apologies for dangerous reading were not dealt with.

When you remonstrate with a Catholic on the character of his reading, you are sure to be met with some of the following, and any one of them is supposed to be a complete justification, no matter how bad the book :—

Style

"*I read these books for the style.*" This is sometimes heard from people whose pretentions to literary taste borders on the grotesque ; but let that pass. Has a paralysis fallen on every hand that wields a Catholic pen ? Does the light of Faith beaming on a human mind quench the beauties of imagination or dull the taste ? Or, is a perfect style to be found only among the apostles of evil ? Surely the long range of Catholic writers offers an ample variety of the most perfect exponents of literary style. Let us be honest. It is not for the style these books are read ; it is because they gratify an unhealthy craving, because they are soft, sensual, suggestive, and stimulate feelings not far from the border-land of sin.

I see no harm

"*I see no harm in them.*" Now by this answer you implicitly admit that you see no good. Have you then no remorse for frittering away such a precious gift of God as time ? If the damned got five minutes of that time to

repent, every chamber in hell would be empty. Yet you squander months and years without a qualm.

You see no harm in it. Look into your own life and what do you discover. The unction of prayer sucked out of your soul, your relish for the Sacraments gone, a dry rot consuming your spiritual life, a nausea for supernatural things, a taste every day becoming more clayey, and an increasing appetite for grosser excitements. Books that you would tremble to touch a year ago you now devour without a pang ; or perhaps the stray shreds of infidelity are weaving themselves into your future creed. Do not mind what you see with the eye of a conscience that is already half-dead. Search deep into your own heart and life, and you will quickly discover the damage done.

Narrow-minded

"*We cannot be narrow-minded.*" Is it then a something to be ashamed of, if in matters pertaining to our eternal interests we are cautious and conservative ? Not prone to take dangerous risks ? This is the disposition sometimes called narrow-mindedness. Surely it is better even to be narrow-minded than pagan-minded.

But let us clear our minds of cant and squarely face the question. Will the person who calls you narrow-minded for exercising

caution in the selection of your books, exhibit his own breadth of mind by going into a chemist's shop, shutting his eyes and gulping down the contents of the first bottle that comes to his hand? Ha! You see how quickly his broad-mindedness is replaced by most careful caution. But a library is like a chemist's shop. The shelves may hold health-giving medicines or the most deadly poisons. As well call the harbour authorities narrow-minded because they close the ports against the cholera ship, as to question the just prudence of the man who shuts his door against the evil book.

Up-to-date

"*We must be up-to-date.*" The man that takes this as the sole principle by which to guide his moral conduct, not only writes himself down "depraved," but an intellectual imbecile. What does he mean? He means that he is incapable of thinking for himself; that he has no fixed chart, but is tossed about in the eddy of fashion; that he has no principle to guide his own conduct by, but has to look to the street and follow where the crowd leads.

The most un-up-to-date people that ever lived were the early Christians. When thousands were swarming to the butcheries of the Coliseum they refused to be up-to-date and kept carefully away from the taint of blood and savagery.

When the debaucheries of the festivals disgraced the city, they again refused to be "up-to-date." No doubt they were sneered at and called "old-fashioned," "priest-ridden," &c. But it was they, and not those who taunted them, who showed loftiness and nobility of mind in taking, not the craze of the hour, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the standard of their conduct.

How to meet the Danger

We have now taken the full bearings of the Danger of the Hour. The remaining question is—How to meet it? To expose the bad book is but half our task—its place must be supplied by the good one. How can this be done? The answer naturally suggests itself. Have we not the Catholic Truth Society? Yes, and it is a splendid weapon if worked as it should be; and its admirable publications pushed into every home.

There is a temptation to belittle these works because they cost only a penny. Though they are reduced to that humble price to meet the wants of the millions, we must not forget that most of them are the productions of the ablest pens, and some of them contain more thought between their modest covers than many a pretentious volume. They have the special advantage of being at a price and in a form

accessible to the young. There are many thousands reading these booklets who would never venture, even if they could, to face the four hundred paged volume. But the Catholic Truth Society works do not cover all our needs. They do two things—they serve to create a thirst for more knowledge, and act as pedagogues to lead the child to the door of the parochial library. Here we strike the goal.

The Parochial Library

The parochial library is the crying want of the hour. The one weapon by which we must beat back an evil which threatens appalling ruin. Our service of God must vary with the need of the different ages. At one time He is best served by the pouring out of martyr blood, at another by the building of splendid churches; but to any man who watches the drift and danger of our generation, it is clear as noonday, that the most effective work a priest can offer God to-day is a well stocked library, open to every child of the parish.

It has been said that if St. Paul were on earth now, he would be found editing a Catholic newspaper.

We have seen the devil using the Press with terrible effect for the destruction of souls; let us wrench it from him and baptize it for the service of Christ.

The parochial library as an instrument of defence and propagation is no new discovery.

Encyclopedia Britannica

"As Christianity made its way," says the "Encyclopedia Britannica," "the institution of libraries became a part of the organisation of the Church. So intimate did the union between literature and religion become, that alongside every Church the Catholic bishops had a library erected." Now, if in times past, when not one man in twenty could read, the unerring foresight of the Church led her to adopt the parochial library as her most able auxiliary, the wisdom of that adoption applies with ten-fold force to our times.

The Blunder of the Past

Fifty years ago we taught the people how to read; awakened within them the native desire for knowledge, and then—stopped. When the national school was built had we established the parochial library and made it the means of continuing the child's education, we would have a different Ireland to-day.

We made the youth hungry and then stepped aside. The British publisher came and occupied the place we should have held. He has been feeding them on garbage and gutter literature since. God grant that it is not too late to undo the mischief of our neglect.

What we spend

It is estimated that we spend four hundred and forty-six thousand pounds every year on English papers, books and magazines. Almost half a million of money! How many of our honest rooftrees would not that sum keep standing? How many of our pure boys and girls would it not save from the "hells" of Chicago and New York.

It is bad enough to part with the bone and muscle, but a nation loses her most precious asset when she exports her intellect. While we have gone on helping the British publisher to the carriage and the suburban villa, the young Irishman, who feels the fire of genius throbbing in his blood, sees but two alternatives before him—to starve at home or sell his brains in a foreign market.

To-day the priest holds the field, but for how long? Recent convulsions should warn us; the ground may rock again; then let us arouse ourselves to the task before us.

Awake!

Whether the priest moves or not the library is sure to come, and what in his hands would be a centre of diffusive light to the parish, under the control of semi-educated or conscienceless men may prove a dark curse.

Let the coarse and sensuous literature of England drop from our people's hands. Let

us encourage native genius to dip her pen into the old holy well of Catholic truth, and build up a literature that will be racy of the soil and redolent of its Faith. Let us feed the minds of the young on the untainted productions of our own countrymen and women. Let us brace them with robust Catholic principles that are mortised into the solid bed-rock of knowledge. Then the most powerful foe the future holds will blow the trumpet in vain.

But to the priest who slumbers, heedless of the swift march of time, and the forces of evil now possessing our land, I say—Dream on, dear gentle soul, dream on! The day may come when you will awake with a thunder-clap, perhaps to find the Irish Church in chains.

CHAPTER EIGHTH

THE YOUNG PRIEST'S ACTIVITIES

I SHOULD like to see the priest at the head of every movement for the bettering and uplifting of the people.

The Last Fortress

Ireland is the last fortress of Catholic Christendom. Latin Christianity is having to struggle for existence ; and for us, time will but multiply, from within and without, the forces organised by Satan to capture the last stronghold that flies the Papal banner.

Satan's First Move

His first effort will be in the future, as it has ever been in the past, to drive a wedge of separation between the priests and the people. That accomplished, half his battle is won. If he can get the people to despise the priest in any capacity as a social man, a politician, &c., he knows that time rubs out fine-drawn distinctions ; they will cease to respect at the altar the man they are accustomed to flout on the street ; and if they once come to despise the priest, they will soon despise the sacraments he administers, and challenge the Gospel which he

preaches. Let us forestal him, and bind the people to our hearts with hoops of steel. For their sakes more than for ours we cannot make our hold too firm or root ourselves too deeply in their affections. For what hope could there be for souls if a chasm should yawn between the pastor and his flock, if those God has united by so many and such sacred ties should glare hatred and distrust from opposing camps ?

The priest is supreme in Ireland to-day ; but in the near future he may have many a rival claimant ; and should the people pass under alien sway, the last fortress is gone.

Now, when we unroll the map of social Ireland, we discover a multitude of ways by which the priest can keep in touch with, direct and uplift the people, and each effort for their sakes means a fresh strengthening of the bonds that bind the hearts of priests and people.

Let us take a survey of the situation. That done, the number of ways by which the priest can become the reformer of his parish will at once disclose themselves.

A Statement of Facts

Have you ever faced the sad problem :—Why are our asylums enlarging while our general population is shrinking ?

Three main causes are responsible.

Food

The food we are eating, especially the use of

overdrawn tea. A gentleman of over twenty years' experience, as governor of a lunatic asylum, assured the writer that next to drink, overdrawn tea was the most responsible agent for insanity. That week he had received a farmer's wife and five strapping sons all stark mad from the poison stewing by so many of our hearths.

Whilst we were guided by the healthy traditions of our own race, we fed on solid food—oatmeal, specially suited to our climate, being a heat-producer, a bone-builder and a tissue-former, rich milk, butter, vegetables and home-cured bacon. What a poor substitute for these luscious foods are the weak white bread and thin cup of tea! The Scotsman has stuck to his national diet; he has done more, he has forced his porridge on the bill of fare of every first-class English hotel.

Activity I

Could not the curate, from the lecture platform, in the school and in private conversation, drive home to the people and open their eyes to the suicide they are committing? I know one priest who gets every farmer in his parish to sow every year a quarter acre of oats for home use. Could not others do the same?

Drink

The second cause is Drink. On this question I shall content myself with quoting a few

statistics. They supply melancholy food for reflection.

In 1899, out of every three placed in the dock for drunkenness in the capital of this Catholic country one was a woman. I think you may search the world for a more shameless exhibition.

Out of every thousand of the general population in England, fifty persons are arrested for drunkenness; out of every thousand of the general population in Ireland, one hundred and forty-three. In other words, we produce almost three convicted drunkards to their one. And still we plume ourselves on our superior virtue.

Our total income from agriculture, the staple industry of the country, is forty millions. On this, mainly, the nation has to live. Yet before a penny is touched for food, clothing or education, almost fourteen out of the forty millions are handed over to the sellers of drink.

Within fifteen years we lost half a million of our people, but we consoled ourselves by opening eleven hundred and seventy-five new public-houses within the same period.

To these figures I shall not add one word : it would only weaken the argument. Will any one deny that the young priest has here an Activity II

ample field for his zeal and energy, and a splendid opportunity of proving himself the reformer and saviour of the people ?

Emigration

The third, most powerful source of lunacy, is Emigration. It may seem a paradox to say that the lessening of our people must naturally mean the increase of insanity. When we say the country loses forty thousand of its inhabitants yearly, we make but a partial statement of the case. Whom do we lose ? Not the average class—the youth, and the youth only go. Two consequences follow. A boy, when he has arrived at his eighteenth year, has cost the country two hundred pounds, and a girl one hundred and fifty. Up to that time they were consumers, they produced little. This enables us to arrive at the appaling fact that Ireland every year pours seven millions worth of human cargo into the emigrant ship.

Would that this was all, but worse remains to be said. Who stay with us ? The aged, the delicate, the infirm. The kernel of the race is going, the husks are remaining with us. Intermarriage among these, intermingling of enfeebled and tainted blood is one of the main contributory causes why the walls of our asylums are enlarging.

Remedies

Let us see what the priest can do to fight

the national curse, and stay the national hæmorrhage.

The Points to Fix on

In dealing with the drink question his main purpose should be to purify public opinion. Till that is done, every other effort must fail. What use in our inveighing against a vice if the people insist on labelling it a virtue? Our first effort must be to get the people to view it in an honest light—to see it as we see it. Public opinion up to this could scarcely be more depraved.

The Village Scandal

It was not an unusual thing to see young boys feigning drunkenness and staggering through the village. Why? They were at an age when pride began to crave for notoriety and applause. They knew the public to which they appealed, and they took the shortest cut to win its approbation, and that was by pretending to be drunk.

An action like that is a terrible verdict against the national conscience. If public opinion were healthy, if it held for such mock heroes, not the incense of applause, but a lash of scorn, if boys were persuaded that so far from exhibiting in their conduct a manly trait, they were only proving themselves degraded puppies, the cure would be immediate.

Perverted Judgments

Listen to people talking of a man who has sent his children out on the world, and his wife to an untimely grave, and you would think it was some visitation of Providence overtook him, and that he deserved all our sympathy.

The agent that dares to threaten an eviction has to carry revolvers and walk the country under the shadow of police protection ; but the father and husband who evicts his own children and flings them into the slums of foreign cities, and sends his broken-hearted wife to the grave, not only has his crime condoned but, by the same people, he is daily smothered in the rose-leaves of apology. "Poor fellow! Ah, it is a good man's fault!" Not one hard word. Yet the world outside the shores of this country are pouring scorn on the degraded name of drunken Ireland.

The Young Men's Pride

Why not appeal to the patriotic pride of the young men by showing the contempt and distrust that follow our race because of this vice? It would touch them to the quick.

The Hereditary Taint

Another point to be insisted on is :—The crime of the drunkard does not die with himself. Like lunacy or consumption it transmits a sad heritage to his offspring. Ninety out of every hundred are drunkards because they inherited tainted blood.

Parents shudder at the bare possibility of their child being born an idiot, or with some repulsive birth-mark. Yet, before the infant can lift its hand in protest, the parents poison its life at the very source and send it on the world with a moral deformity marking its nature.

These were the two sources of weakness in the past: a public opinion that fostered, instead of smiting, the curse, and an hereditary taint that grew stronger with every generation, while the will to resist became more feeble. Thank God, the dawn of a brighter day is with us: there is a healthy awakening of public opinion. The Gaelic revival has for the first time in our history linked sobriety with patriotism: the word has gone forth that reconstructed Ireland must not rest on staggering pillars. The young priest of the future has the rising tide with him, and Ireland has seen her darkest day.

The Dawn

No matter how we may deplore emigration, we must deal with it as a fact.

From what class are the emigrants drawn? From the young. It is hard to part with them: but there is one consolation. They go to build up the Church in other lands, but every precaution must be taken to strengthen them

Is the Emigrant Prepared

His Peril Abroad

for the trials awaiting them. Now, every returned American and Australian priest will candidly tell you that the Irish emigrant is poorly equipped for his new surroundings.

Dr. Kenrick and Cardinal Gibbons go so far as to say that the neglect of the Irish priest in preparing his emigrating flock, is the main source of leakage in the American Church. They are not able to answer the most ordinary objections, and they have not moral strength to withstand the shafts of ridicule. In the fierce cross-currents of unbelief, he is poorly able to keep his foothold. Many stagger; some fall, never to rise.

We reply:—Look at our Confirmation classes, and at the admirable lives of the youth before they leave us. Neither of these weaken the contention. At the age a child is confirmed, he is incapable of reflective reason; his knowledge is three parts memory. It is between the Confirmation day and the twentieth year that the convictions and principles that guide a life time are formed. Yet, this is the precise period during which the young boy is permitted to starve.

Secondly, the good life of a person reared in a purely Catholic atmosphere is no guarantee of what he may become when transplanted to

a country where the very atmosphere palpitates with doubt and denial.

Here surely is a field that urgently demands a young priest's activities. Activity III

Every young priest should be the eldest brother to the young men of the parish, the repository of their confidence, the director of their sports, the organizer of their Feis; and when there is danger of angry passions running high or of drunkenness getting in among them, the curate's place is not the study, but the football field.

To such a curate it would be an easy task to organize the young men of the parish for a Sunday meeting during the four winter months, and give them a thorough course in "Catholic belief" or "Faith of Our Fathers."

This would be a distinct advantage not only to those who are leaving, but to those who remain. The Catholic mind of this country is now, by travel and reading, brought into constant contact with Protestant and infidel thought.

These meetings should wear as little of the appearance of a class as possible. Boys should be taught to look upon them as friendly meetings of brothers discussing the weapons with which to face the future: the session might

appropriately close with an excursion or a social evening.

Now that we have treated emigration as a fact, let us turn to a few of the means by which it might be lessened.

The Summer Swallow

A constant source of temptation is the sight of the returned emigrant with flash jewellery, superior airs and stories of boasted wealth.

When summer brings these returned swallows, a spirit of discontent with their social surroundings seizes the youth. The priest's duty is to impress upon them that the bright side of the picture alone is presented to them : there is another side of awful darkness.

Activity IV

The successful one they see, but the fate of the submerged ninety-nine is hidden from their eyes.

Our people emigrate without a knowledge of skilled labour ; they have to take the lowest occupations and bring up their children in vile surroundings : they are lost in shoals.

Had the youth of this country the writer's experience : did they see hundreds of their countrymen sleeping in the parks of Sydney, without the shelter of a roof and without knowing where to turn in the morning for a bit : could they hear the thirty-two accents of Ireland in the low streets of dens where souls

and bodies rot, they would try their hands at a dozen means of winning honest bread before turning their faces towards the emigrant ship.

Could we but take the twenty-two thousand Irish-born convicts out of the jails of one city—New York—with their clanking fetters and arrow-branded jackets, and march them through the length and breadth of Ireland, and show the youth, that, if some wear bangles, others wear handcuffs, it would go far to cure the microbe of unrest.

Every tale of distress, failure and hardship abroad should be repeated in the Irish provincial journals. No effort should be spared to show the people, not one but both sides of the picture.

Activity V Amusements

One of the most important problems facing the young priest of to-day is :—How to organise healthy and sinless amusements for the people. Our skies are gloomy, our climate depressing, and the very dreariness of country life causes thousands to fly. Look at the groups of young men at the village corners, where is the hope or contentment in their looks ?

Goldsmith's Days

I think you may challenge the world's literature for more wholesome pictures of rural pleasures than those mirrored in the " Deserted Village." They are not creations of the poet's

fancy, but chronicles of facts that lived before his eyes. In them, you have the image of Ireland as she lived before the black shadow of '47 fell upon her. All went on in the open daylight, under the eyes of parents and friends.

"The young contended while the old surveyed."

Virtue was safe, tired hearts were cheered, and, whilst these sports flourished, few Irish boys or girls wanted to know the road to the emigrant ship.

Would it be possible to re-create the Ireland of Goldsmith's days?

The Winter's Night

One thing, however, is not outside the range of possibility—to persuade parents in rural districts to make some effort to brighten the lives of their children; to have all household work done two hours before bedtime, to have a bright fire on the hearth and a bright lamp on the table, and a plentiful supply of the Catholic Truth Society books, Catholic papers and periodicals always at hand. Many a poor boy and girl, whose thoughts to-day are turning to Sydney or New York as an escape from cheerless drudgery, would then read a new meaning into the word "home." No matter how toil presses during the day, the prospective two hours of brightness and pleasure cheers them.

"Give a man a taste for reading and the means of gratifying it," says Sir John Herschel,* "and you can hardly fail to make him a happy man, you place him in contact with the best society of every period of history—the wisest, the wittiest, the tenderest, the bravest and the purest characters that adorn humanity." A parent who cannot line his child's pocket with gold has in this simple plan a means of enriching his head with knowledge, and so sending him on the world armed. Self-respect would grow; the gross pleasures of the card-table or the public-house would lose their charm. Your own words would fall on ears steadily becoming more intelligent. The parish after five years would wear a new face.

Activity VI The country School-house

Could not the young men be gathered once a week during the winter months, and the school house be converted into a literary, debating or lecture room?

If the young priest prepared one lecture a month, he might revolutionize the district by teaching the people how to organize and foster small industries or technical branches suited to the localities. There is wealth in the mushrooms on the field, the blackberries on the hedge, and the cresses by the stream. In other

* Eton Address

countries thousands are made by these unnoticed products. Why not here ?

Our Ruins

When the summer comes, the curate could easily organize occasional bicycle excursions with the young men to some memorable Catholic ruin, in whose history he should be well made up. The saints and scholars who have glorified our annals are lying around our churches ; we stumble over their graves for forty years sometimes, without enquiring who they were or what they did. I am aware there are laudable exceptions : they are, however, isolated. When the public wants to know anything about our monasteries, they often have to turn to the layman and even to the parson.

The small number of priests in the Archæological Society is a striking reproach. One would think that our saints and their works were something to be ashamed of, since the natural guardians of their memories have practically abandoned them. This country is filled with catacombs. Every child should be made acquainted with the life of the leading saint, and the history of the most memorable ruin in the locality ; those hoary prophets, now so mute, would then speak with tongues of fire out of the dim past, telling the story of our fathers' Faith and heroic achievements.

Let us now rise to a higher plane of the young priest's activities.

Activity VII Literature

It is a stupendous and a humiliating fact that, while this country is deluged with the writings of the sensualist and the infidel, there are over three thousand brainy priests upon the land, and the world of thought knows nothing of them.

Cambridge and Oxford

When we read of brilliant students at Cambridge or Oxford, we naturally look forward to see them leaders of thought or action in their own land, and we are seldom disappointed. Our Irish colleges are discharging yearly swarms from their doors, many of them men with brilliant records. Who hears of them after? What have these first-class premium men, who gave such splendid promise, done with their gifts and knowledge? How little does the Irish Church owe them? The day the premium book was handed them, all serious effort died. They were content to rest for the remainder of their lives under the shade of their academic laurels.

First Premium Men

The soldier is not satisfied with the triumphs of his recruit days. He knows that the purpose of his life then is not to gain a prize and stop at that, but to acquire efficient skill in the use of his weapons that he may become a living force on the future field of action.

The college is but the training ground, not the final goal; the real field of our activities lies outside its walls. Yet when the scholastic course closes these richly-gifted men dip below the horizon, and the world seldom hears of them again; the destructive wave that in its silent strength is covering the land receives no check from them; they are engraving no impression on the intellect of the day.

Our humiliation and surprise increase when we turn to the publisher's lists and see parsons, who have to prepare to meet critical audiences Sunday after Sunday, and are weighted with the cares of heavy families, holding leading places in every literary enterprise.

Now, if our young men set to work to popularise our native saints, and in their lives dig up the buried glories of our Catholic past, if each diocese produced even one crisp well-written life, what a splendid step in advance.

But the demand for our literary activities is far wider than the shores of Ireland.

America and Australia

The American and Australian Churches are daughters of this soil. We are proud of them; they are the frontier regiments of our fighting army; they are daily advancing Patrick's standard over fresh fields of conquest: but what help have we given them?

The present generation of priests there are builders. But, like the men on Jerusalem's walls, they have to grasp the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other.

Protestantism in those lands is fast running to its final declension—naked infidelity. Now the infidel knows no rest ; activity is the law of his existence. The buried ghosts of past heresies are resuscitated and draped in all the attractiveness of modern dress. The arsenal of error stored by every perverse genius from Arius to Tyndal is daily discharged into the Catholic ranks. There is scarcely a truth free from truculent assault.

It is hard to ask the men toiling in the glare of the camp fires, to fight the battles and manufacture the shells.

Now, all that is best of French Catholic intellect has been given to this cause for the past century. The priest who would devote a few winters to the holy toil of translating this into a shape suitable to the needs of our fighting millions would do an act of merit that God alone could measure. Yet what ammunition have we supplied to our brave soldiers ? Scarcely a grain of shot.

Why this sterility ? Why this barrenness ? Is it our native lethargy or our native modesty ?

The Causes of Sterility

or the defective training of our colleges in neglecting to foster literary tastes ?

We will not pause to enquire. That there is one sad cause is beyond all question—the bitterness of clerical criticism. The Irish priest who takes to the cultivation of letters ought to choose St. Sebastian for his patron saint; for he will have an arrow planted in every square inch of his body.

While we have no word of condemnation for the writers who are sucking the life-blood of Faith from our people, should one of ourselves show style in his sermons, or attach his name to a magazine article, the amount of mordant criticism he has to face is sufficient to make the stoutest heart sink.

The average Irish skull in the hands of a phrenologist will show a development of destructive bumps surpassed by none, but when he searches for constructive ones, a glass of no small magnifying power must come to his aid.

The habit of sneering criticism begins in the college and should be killed in its birth-place. The man who drops an icy or an acid word into the warm enthusiasm of a young heart commits a great crime. He may paralyse the purpose of a noble life. Let us reserve all our hard blows and hard words for Christ's enemies, and

a cheerful encouragement to His friends should not cost us a drop of blood.

Here we pause, fully conscious of the incompleteness of our task. The many possible and profitable fields of the young priest's activities are no more than hinted at. The Task is Finished

We are passing through a period of change : old landmarks are disappearing, but if the future is to be made secure, the priest of the present must cling to the people and teach them to cling to him. In the revival of their industries or their language, in the Feis or the hurling field, the priest should be the source of their inspiration and their controlling director.

Woe to the parish where the priest sits idly or sinks into dreamy lethargy while the people pass from him, away.

The world is moving onward. Our world is willing just now that we move with and direct it. But how long, O Lord, how long ? Let us remain stationary and it will move without us ; and once lost, lost for ever. Farewell

A glance at the Continent should fire us to desperate efforts. You see the Church dashed to pieces in the seething vortex of destruction ; in some countries honey-combed to rottenness, ready to totter and fall before the first outburst of Socialistic fury. The Press teems with

ribald jeer and blatant blasphemy. The priesthood, a separate caste, hounded like lepers of old from the highways of public life, voiceless and despised—the apostate priest hailed with delight smothered in incense—the faithful priest lashed at the pillar of public scorn. O God, shall Ireland—the last fortress—follow ?

That question is for us to answer : the shaping of the future lies in the hands of the living present.

Let listlessness prevail, and when an apostle of evil does arise, perhaps in the not distant future, he will appeal to the past for his justification.

He will tell the people, that for a full century three thousand four hundred priests were upon the land. Talent, leisure and unbounded trust were theirs. Yet, where are the literature, village libraries, social organizations, or other agencies of enlightenment promoted by them ? Has not the country rotted and the emigrant ship been glutted ? Away with them ! Why cumber they the ground ?

That day, please God, shall never come, if we sink deep into our souls the conviction that a great effort is required, and fling our hearts into it ; that the ever increasing new needs and foes of to-day cannot be met with the anti-

quated weapons of the past; that the old rut must be abandoned and the new ground broken: then the future is secure. The old citadel of Catholic Christendom will continue a fortress, flying the old flag, towering above the Atlantic breakers with a strength impregnable and a Faith undimmed—a Pharos of spiritual splendour.

And when in other lands eyes grow dim with the mists of despair, they will look up and the light of a new-born hope will enkindle within them. And when hearts in other lands are sinking from repeated failure, they will pulse with the inspiration of a fresh courage when the story of our efforts and our triumphs is recalled.

THE END

PRESS NOTICES

"Every thoughtful mind amongst us, whether priest or layman, will thank the courageous writer who throws upon our insular prejudices the flashlights of other civilisations, and shows us certain defects which we can only neglect at our own peril. We hope that this little book will find its way to every student's desk in Ireland and abroad, and that its lessons will be taken to heart by professors and *alumni* alike. It is worth reading if only for its style, which is far above that usually assumed by writers on similar subjects. But its chief value is in the deep insight it manifests as to the wants of the age and the necessary equipment of the young apostles of our race, whose mission will be to strange peoples and curious, though some times sympathetic, souls who are seeking the light and failing to find it. It is a book to be read with humility and a total absence of that mild conceit which refuses to accept any but domestic and partial criticism. The words are those of a thinker and an orator."—CANON SHEEHAN in the *Freeman's Journal.*

"Anyone who has lived five years in Australia would advise every young priest coming to this country to have a copy of Father Phelan's admirable book in his luggage, and read it more than once. The young ecclesiastic coming hither who treats lightly the advice given him will find by-and-by that every line of the book is true; every priest who has lived a few years on the Australian mission will know already that it is so."—*Melbourne Advocate.*

"The Rev. M. Phelan, S.J., stresses the necessity of culture of mind and manners for young priests and seminarians. Father Phelan, himself a noted preacher, devotes several helpful chapters to the means of acquiring excellence in preaching. The book is brimful of valuable hints and helps, and their value is not diminished by the fact that the style is racy and readable throughout. The following is intended for Irish readers, but the advice has wider application:—'. . . He should not commit the signal folly of attempting to engraft an imported accent

on his own; he should speak as an Irishman, but as an educated Irishman.' 'The Young Priest's Keepsake' should become a *vade-mecum*."—*America.*

"With considerable skill and plenty of plain speaking, Father Phelan gives some admirable advice to young priests in regard to the study of English and the composition and delivery of sermons. His experiences in Ireland and on the foreign missions are his claim to say what his opinion is, and his opinion is weighty. Father Phelan has wise counsels to give, and gives them in a most pleasing way. He is always bright, always interesting, and always instructive. His book deserves to be known to the clergy at large, and we wish it the circulation it deserves."—*Catholic Times.*

"This is, indeed, a very valuable book for the young priest. It is intended chiefly for those who are going on the foreign mission, and it would be well for them if they would take to heart the sound advice given to them here by a man of wide experience and great success in the missionary field. The first chapter on the necessity of culture and gentlemanly manners is alone worth the price of the book. Young priests have probably often heard of the necessity of writing their sermons, but I doubt if they ever had the advantage of having it put before them in such a practical and convincing fashion as that in which it is done by Father Phelan in his third chapter. The same notes of practical sound sense mark the chapters on 'Pulpit Oratory' and on 'Elocution.' Altogether, this book should be the *Keepsake* of every young priest. It contains many things that will benefit priests, young or old, of every description. Father Phelan deserves our thanks as well as our congratulations on the success of his work."—*Irish Ecclesiastical Record.*

"A wonderful amount of practically useful advice, the matured fruit of vast missionary experience, seasoned by conscientious study and a fraternal longing to assist the young priest are the most salient features of this inimitably-written volume. The style is excellent. In crisp, accurate language every paragraph, every sentence even, tells exactly what the writer wishes to state, and no more. . . . The book has not appeared an hour too soon. . . . It is bound to be of immense service to Irish students, especially those preparing for a missionary life in foreign countries. . . . I take the responsibility of highly recommending Father Phelan's book to those for whose instruction and

efficiency the work has been written."—The Author of "Innisfail" in *Sydney Freeman's Journal.*

"Father Phelan is a model of the ideas he advocates. His English is pure without being dull for a moment. He exemplifies his theories. If your are a preacher, or wish to be, if you are teaching rhetoric or learning rhetoric, if you are a seminarian or a friend of a seminarian, get this book for yourself or your friend."—*American Messenger.*

"Those who know Father Phelan as a preacher will not require to be told that his book is simple, solid, and practical, and that his method of exposition is lucid, homely, and vigorous. Purely literary effort has been no aim of the writer, and yet it would be hard to name a recent book which can be read with greater pleasure, for the charm of its style alone. The expression is cut down to the last necessary word, but every necessary word is there; every idea is expressed simply, but adequately, and with the finish and lustre of the diamond. . . . It would be interesting to the reader and a pleasure to the writer to quote from Father Phelan's work some of the many magnificent passages, but the book is so beautifully knit together, ideas follow each other in such logical sequence, that no selection could give an adequate impression of the work. But with an easy conscience I can recommend every clerical student, every young priest, and for that matter, old priests too, to procure a copy, confident that any reader who takes it up will read it through, as I have done, before laying it down, and feel the better for having done so."—IBH MAINE in *The Leader.*

"The Rev. M. J. Phelan, S.J., says much that is sensible in his little volume. We are glad that he denounces 'the signal folly of attempting to engraft an imported accent on his own native one, which is sometimes done by the Irish priest in England with deplorable results. It is a useful little book, well printed and neatly bound."—(English) *Catholic Book Notes.*

"The title of a clerical *vade-mecum* is scarcely too ambitious a one to give to 'The Young Priest's Keepsake'; a work which cannot but be regarded by all whose good fortune it will be to read it, as one of the most admirable works dealing with clerical life that has appeared in Ireland for many a day. The author, Rev. M. J. Phelan, S.J., bases his claim for a hearing upon a long experience as missionary priest, and upon the possession of ordinary powers of observation. Those who know Father Phelan rate his claims much higher. His fame as a

preacher is spread throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. His wide and varied learning, his acute powers of observation, his keen sense of humour and sound practical judgment are common topics of conversation amongst a wide circle of friends. The fine flower and fruit ripened by constant study and wide experience are modestly displayed in this little book."—*Irish Independent.*

"The ecclesiastical student who takes up 'The Young Priest's Keepsake' will quickly realise that he has not only fallen in with a wise mentor but a cordially kind friend, to say nothing of a charming writer. The way is marked out for him by one who has trodden it, and who, as we can gather, from the evident culture and literary grace of his pages and his renown as a preacher of missions, has been no laggard in those studies which he so earnestly recommends to young priests and ecclesiastical students. . . . If Father Phelan's lessons were taken to heart by the coming race of priests we, or at least our children, would behold the Catholic pulpit transformed into a mighty living force. At present it is far from being that. It is in this country the weakest part of the great redeeming machinery of the church, and it should be so strong and effective. . . . The book is brilliantly written, and, as Father Phelan maintains his position in no mamby-pamby or apologetic fashion, the reader is treated to some very lively passages."—*The Tribune* (Melbourne).

"In this little work from the pen of Father Phelan, S.J., those who are in course of preparation for the high calling of the sacred ministry will find some advice worthy of serious consideration. . . . It is an age of 'experts'; as an 'expert' of undoubted merit in the sphere of missionary work Father Phelan well may claim the right of giving authoritative advice to those aspiring to that field of labour in which his own efforts have been crowned with such signal success. . . . Were the revered author not, in fact what he is, a Jesuit missionary of acknowledged excellence and wide fame, the value of his advice would be none the less evident on a thoughtful perusal of his book. . . . Even a mere casual reading would send the young student away with a clear realization of the steps he must take to secure that in his mind or personality there shall be nothing to make any man, however critical, however captious, think less of that Living Word whose mouthpiece it will be his lot in life to be. . . . He has done well and very well in trying to make it easy for future workers in the same field to do justice to their sacred calling and to themselves."—*Cork Examiner.*

Press Notices

"He knows what he is talking about, and he speaks with a first-hand knowledge of what is required by young priests coming to Australia."—*Catholic Press* (Sydney).

"Amongst the many qualifications which the author has brought to his delicate task, not the least are his earnestness and his enthusiasm for his subject. These qualities are responsible for some of the best features of the book. They have given it its thoroughly constructive character and tempered even its severest criticisms. The greater part of the book is devoted to sacred eloquence. Here, of course, the writer speaks with the authority of a master. He will deserve the gratitude of many a young preacher for having given to the world the benefit of his own experience in an art which he has made so completely his own. In the chapter on elocution he lays down excellent principles for the delivery of sermons and suggests means of curing the most common defects that mar pulpit oratory. Finally, he gives elaborate hints on the best means of composing sermons. For instance, the sermon writer is advised to seize without delay, and commit to writing, a brilliant thought no matter how unseasonable the time at which it presents itself. When a train of thought is allowed to go by it either never returns or returns like the Sybil with diminished treasure. This is but one grain of the practical wisdom which is scattered so liberally through the pages of 'The Young Priest's Keepsake."—*Mungret Annual.*

"A very thoughtful and eloquent book. No better book of its kind could be in the hands of young priests who are at the beginning of life's work. Its table of contents shows the subjects which find a place in its pages. Under each of these headings Father Phelan gives much useful information and adds a charm to the knowledge which he imparts by the apt illustrations with which he adorns it."—*Theological Quarterly.*

"This book is sure to be read with keen interest by a great many young priests and priests no longer young; and it is not likely to drop out of use after a few months. Father Phelan speaks from wide, practical experience, and he develops his views with clearness and earnestness, and with many fresh and vivid illustrations. We would be surprised to hear that any priest young or old taking up 'The Young Priest's Keepsake' and turning over the pages, at No. 50 Upper O'Connell Street, laid it down and went out without arranging to have it sent after him."—*Irish Monthly.*

"It is well known that Father Phelan is an authority on the subject of

pulpit eloquence, for he is himself one of the most eloquent preachers of the Jesuit Order, and his profound eloquence and ripe scholarship are only equalled by his deep knowledge of human nature. . . . The theological students and others who wish to acquire the art of speaking to the heart, and preachers who realize that they themselves are becoming stale and commonplace, cannot do better than read and inwardly digest this beautiful work."—*Galway Express.*

"'The Young Priest's Keepsake' seems to us an exceedingly practical and commonsense work. When we have said this much we have said no more of Father Phelan's book than it deserves. The volume has been admirably produced by Messrs. M. H. Gill & Son, on Irish paper, with Irish ink, and bears the imprimatur of the Irish trade mark. We hope it will have the wide circulation it deserves."—*Irish Catholic.*

"The Rev M. J. Phelan, S.J., gives youthful clerics the benefit of his personal experience as a student in ecclesiastical colleges, and a missionary for almost a quarter of a century in Australia and Ireland. The volume has a chapter on culture, one on English, three on sermons, and a final one on elocution. They are all suggestive, and some of them will prove not unprofitable to priests who can no longer be called young."—*Ave Maria.*

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PHELAN, S. J., MICHAEL J.
AUTHOR

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